NATION

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Vijay to take oath as TN CM; TVK crosses 118 magic mark

VCK, IUML back Vijay; Swearing in ceremony today

CHENNAI, 9 MAY

It took five days, four meetings with the Governor and prolonged negotiations with potential allies, but the political drama in Tamil Nadu is heading towards its climax. Actor-turned-politician C Joseph Vijay, founder of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), is set to take oath as Chief Minister at 10 am on Sunday at Nehru Stadium in Chennai.

The development follows an election result that stunned political observers, with TVK securing 108 seats in the 234-member Assembly and emerging as the single largest party, breaking the long-standing dominance of the DMK and AIADMK. Vijay's party had earlier fallen short of a majority but quickly moved to secure external support.

A breakthrough came when DMK allies Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) and the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), each holding two seats, extended unconditional support to TVK. Along with backing from Congress and Left parties, the tally rose to 120, just above the majority mark of 118. This support enabled Vijay to stake claim to form government, though allegations of bargaining over portfolios and "resort politics" soon followed, with legislators being moved to hotels in Mamallapuram and Hyderabad.

TVK Chief Vijay meets Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar meets for the fourth time in five day at the Lok Bhavan in Chennai —*PTI*

Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar appointed Vijay as Chief Minister after receiving letters of support from allied parties following an hour-long meeting. The Governor has asked the new Chief Minister to seek a vote of confidence by May 13. However, earlier attempts by Vijay to meet the Governor reportedly faced delays, triggering criticism from Left leaders who accused Raj Bhavan of obstructing the process.

Meanwhile, controversy erupted after the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) accused TVK of submitting a forged support letter claiming backing from its MLA. Party leader TTV Dhinakaran alleged horse-trading and filed a police complaint in Guindy prompting a preliminary inquiry.

TVK dismissed the allegations releasing a video said to show the MLA signing the letter voluntarily.

The political transition has also sparked parallel legal and political developments. A retired IPS officer has approached the Supreme Court challenging the Governor's refusal to initially invite Vijay to form government, arguing that the decision bypassed constitutional norms and denied a floor test despite TVK being the single largest party.

As Vijay prepares to take oath the emergence of TVK marks a significant shift in Tamil Nadu politics ending decades of duopoly between Dravidian majors and ushering in a fragile coalition government dependent on diverse allies.

Reactions continued to pour in across parties, with AIADMK leaders offering cautious congratulations while maintaining political distance. Congress MLAs were shifted to Hyderabad amid fears of poaching, reflecting heightened "resort politics" in the state. Speculation also grew over cabinet allocations and a possible Deputy Chief Minister post for VCK as coalition negotiations continued ahead of the trust vote deadline. —*PTI*

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Suvendu sworn-in as Bengal's first BJP CM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with West Bengal CM Suvendu Adhikari during the latters' oath-taking ceremony in Kolkata

> He has made a mark as a leader who remained deeply connected to the people and understood their aspirations from close quarters
>
> -Narendra Modi, PM

> Today marks the end of decades of misrule and the beginning of a double-engine era of development, peace, and prosperity. The era of 'Sonar Bangla' officially begins
>
> -Suvendu Adhikari, WB CM

KOLKATA, 9 MAY

Suvendu Adhikari on Saturday took oath as West Bengal's first BJP chief minister, mark-ing the saffron party's first government in the state since Independence and ending the Trinamool Congress's 15-year rule.

The swearing-in ceremony was held at Kolkata's Brigade Parade Grounds, a venue long associated with the Left and later the TMC, underscoring the BJP's symbolic political breakthrough in Bengal. Governor RN Ravi administered the oath of office and secrecy before a massive gathering of BJP supporters waving saffron flags and chanting "Jai Shri Ram".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, chief ministers of NDA-ruled states and senior BJP leaders attended the ceremony. As Modi walked onto the stage, he bowed low and touched his forehead to the dais with folded hands, draw-ing loud cheers from the crowd.

Dressed in a saffron kurta and white dhoti with a red border, Adhikari took oath first and greeted supporters with folded hands. The BJP leader won both Nandigram and Bhaba-nipur and led the party's aggressive campaign against the TMC.

The BJP secured 207 seats in the 294-member Assembly, scripting its biggest electoral success in eastern India. The party's rise in Bengal gathered pace through organisation-al expansion, sharp political polarisation and high-profile defections from rival parties.

Thousands of supporters arrived at Brigade from early morning carrying lotus flags, while giant LED screens played speeches by Modi and Adhikari. Chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" echoed across the Maidan as the Prime Minister arrived. A makeshift memorial carrying the names of slain BJP workers was also erected near the venue.

Unlike traditional oath-taking ceremonies at Raj Bhavan, the BJP chose Brigade Parade Grounds to project the transition as a popular mandate and the beginning of a "Sonar Bangla" under a "double-engine government".

For Adhikari, the ceremony marked a dramatic political transformation from a former TMC strategist to the leader who unseated the party in Bengal. — *PTI*

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EC's special observer for SIR appointed CM's advisor

Retired IAS officer Subrata Gupta appointed advisor to West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari per notification. Gupta, 1990 batch, was engaged by the Election Commission as Special Roll Observer for the SIR exercise ahead of the recently concluded Assembly elections. The BJP government also appointed IAS officer Shantanu Bala as the chief minister's private secretary. Bala, 2017 batch, was ADM South 24 Parganas. Both officers will take charge immediately, notifications.

Not 'former CM': Mamata's changes X and Facebook bio

Former West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday updated her profiles on X and Facebook, describing herself as the "Founder Chairperson of the All India Tri-namool Congress and Chief Minister of West Bengal (15th, 16th and 17th Vidhan Sa-bha)." Notably, she avoided using the word "former" while referring to her tenure as chief minister. Her delay in updating the profile had triggered criticism on social media, with some users tagging Elon Musk and demanding changes to her account.

WFI declares Vinesh ineligible to compete till June

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) on Saturday issued a detailed show-cause notice to Vinesh Phogat, accusing her of indiscipline and anti-doping rule violations, and declared her ineligible to compete in domestic events till 26 June, 2026 for failing to complete the mandatory six-month notice period required for athletes returning from retirement under UWW Anti-Doping Rules. It means that the two-time World Championship medallist will have to wait for her comeback as she was tragetting the National Open Ranking event in Gonda, starting Sunday, for her return to competition after quitting the sport in 2024 following her disqualification from the Paris Olympic Games. —*PTI*

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2 minors raped in Assam's Jorhat; grandfather held

JORHAT, 9 MAY

Two minor sisters were allegedly raped by their grandfather in Assam's Jorhat district, with one girl dying by suicide the next day, police said on Saturday. The incident occurred under Teok police station area on Thursday evening.

Police said the two girls, aged 10 and 12 years, had gone to pick mangoes in the backyard of their house when their grandfather accosted them and raped them. "The elder sister died by suicide on Friday, following which the incident came to light. It was then that the 10-year-old victim narrated the previous day's incident," they said. The 65-year-old accused, the victim's grandfather from the paternal side, has been arrested based on the girl's statement. —*PTI*

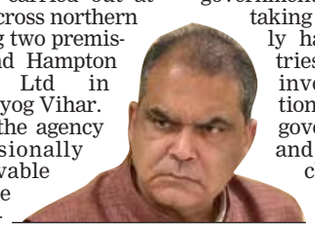
ED arrests Punjab minister

NEW DELHI/ CHANDIGARH, 9 MAY

Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday arrested Punjab industries minister Sanjeev Arora in a money laundering probe linked to alleged fake GST purchases of mobile phones worth more than Rs 100 crore and the suspected round-tripping of funds from Dubai to India.

Arora, 62, an AAP MLA from Ludhiana West, was taken into custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) following early morning raids at his residence in Chandigarh. Officials alleged that he was "non-cooperative" during questioning and said he would be brought to Delhi.

ED said the latest probe concerns alleged bogus purchases and exports used to route illegitimate funds back into India. Searches were carried out at five locations across northern India, including two premises in Delhi and Hampton Sky Realty Ltd in Gurugram's Udyog Vihar.



On 19 April, the agency had provisionally attached movable and immovable assets belonging to Hampton Sky Realty Ltd, Arora and entities linked to him in connection with alleged FEMA violations involving bogus sales and exports worth Rs 157.12 crore. Arora became one of the most influential ministers in the Bhagwant Mann government within a year of taking office. He currently handles the industries and commerce, investment promotion, power and local government portfolios and is considered close to the AAP central leadership. —*PTI*

Dog mauls 4-year-old kid to death in Bidar

BIDAR, 9 MAY

A four-month-old infant was allegedly mauled to death by a stray dog in this district on Saturday morning, police said. The incident occurred in Dabalgundi village in Humnabad taluk of Bidar district, they said. According to the police, the infant had been put to sleep inside the house by the parents, who had gone outside, leaving the door unlocked.

During this time, a stray dog allegedly entered the house and attacked the infant, who was sleeping in a cradle, a senior police officer said. The dog severely injured the baby by biting it on different parts of the body.

Hearing the baby's cries, the parents rushed back into the house in panic, only to find the infant lying in a pool of blood, he said.

The infant was rushed to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared the baby dead, he added. A case in the matter is yet to be registered, police said. —*PTI*

INDIAN SAILOR KILLED AFTER DHOW CATCHES FIRE IN HORMUZ

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

An Indian sailor was killed and several others injured after their wooden dhow caught fire near the Strait of Hormuz, government sources said on Saturday

Seventeen other Indian crew members were rescued by a passing vessel following the incident on Friday, they said, noting that the exact cause of the blaze is still being ascertained.

The incident happened amid increasing hostilities between Iran and the US in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital maritime chokepoint between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman through which a significant portion of the world's oil supply passes.

The incident happened amid increasing hostilities between Iran and the US in the Strait of Hormuz —*PTI*

"A wooden Dhow, carrying general cargo, with 18 Indian crew capsized yesterday close to the Strait of Hormuz after it caught fire," said a source.

"In this incident, one Indian on the dhow died while four received burn injuries. The injured are receiving medical treatment in Dubai and are safe," the source said.

Officials from the Indian Consulate in Dubai met the rescued Indian nationals last night, said another source.

The consulate is also in touch with the dhow owner and is extending all possible assistance, the sources said. —*PTI*

Advanced Agni missile with MIRV system takes off from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island —*PTI*

BIG DEFENCE BOOST

1 missile, many targets in single launch: India tests advanced Agni

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

India has successfully test-fired an Advanced Agni missile with the ability to deploy multiple payloads on separate targets simultaneously, a milestone that places the country in a select league of global powers.

The testing of the missile with Multiple Independently Targeted Re-Entry Vehicle (MIRV) system was carried out from Odisha's APJ Abdul Kalam Island on Friday, the defence ministry said.

The MIRV feature ensures that a single missile can deploy multiple warheads on different targets simultaneously.

While the ministry said the flight test of an advanced Agni missile with MIRV was carried out, sources said it was an Agni-5 missile and that the trial was conducted to check the MIRV technology under 'Mission Divyastra.'

The maiden trial of Agni-5 with MIRV was carried out in March 2025.

"India conducted the successful flight-trial of an advanced Agni missile with the MIRV system on 8 May," the defence ministry said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has complimented the DRDO, the Army, and industry partners on the successful flight-test of the missile.

This will add an incredible capability to the country's defence capability, he said. —*PTI*

US proposes sharp hike in min wages for H1B hires

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

The US Department of Labour has proposed raising minimum wages for workers hired under the H1B visa programme by up to 33 per cent, arguing that the move would prevent foreign workers from undercutting American salaries.

Under the proposed rule, released on March 27, prevailing wage levels across four employment categories would rise significantly. Entry-level salaries would increase from USD 73,279 to USD 97,746 annually, while Level II wages would rise to USD 123,212, Level III to USD 147,333 and Level IV to USD 175,464. Wage rates vary by city.

The department said the current wage framework, set nearly two decades ago, no longer adequately protects US workers and allows employers to recruit foreign workers at salaries below those paid to similarly employed Americans.

The changes would affect H1B, H1B1, E-3 and PERM labour certification programmes.. —*PTI*

Police hunt youths who attempted to assault ASI

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 9 MAY

The Nandi Hills Police are searching for a group of youths suspected of trying to assault an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) on duty near Nagarjuna Engineering College in Chikkaballapur on Friday. Police said ASI Gangaraju and Constable Gangaraju, on routine patrol, observed youths riding motorcycles with modified horns, creating a nuisance in Chikkaballapur. They stopped the bikers and warned them that such modifications violate traffic rules and disturb public peace. Enraged, about eight youths confronted the ASI, held him by his hands, snatched his lathi, and argued. When he explained the law, the youths pushed him. Constable Gangaraju intervened and chased the youths away. The officers returned to the station and lodged a complaint. Police are now examining CCTV footage to identify the suspects. *—SALAR NEWS*

—ANI

Man jumps from bus, dies after being hit by car

HUBBALLI, 9 MAY

A man travelling in a government bus died after allegedly jumping out of the moving vehicle and being run over by a car behind it on Friday night. The man's identity remains unknown. Police have registered a case and are investigating the circumstances. Officials from NWKRTC said the incident happened on the Hubballi–Haveri route near Gabbur Cross Ring Road while the bus was returning from Dharmasthala. Around 8.30pm, the passenger opened the rear door of the moving bus and jumped onto the road. A Scorpio SUV behind the bus hit him before overturning after losing control. The car's passengers sustained injuries and were admitted to KLE Hospital. *—Salar News*

BSY rules out retirement, to continue work for BJP

Shah hails him for building BJP's base in a difficult region

CHITRADURGA. 9 MAY

Union Home Minister Amit Shah honours BJP leader BS Yediyurappa at a function held in Chitradurga on Saturday *— Salar News*

BJP Veteran BS Yediyurappa on Saturday declared that there was "no question of retirement" from public life, saying he would continue working for the party and the nation as long as he had the strength. He was speaking at his 'Abhimanotsava' in Chitradurga, a felicitation marking 50 years in politics.

The event drew a large gathering, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who flew in from Kolkata, along with seers and leaders from various communities. Yediyurappa described the occasion not as an individual honour but as a celebration of "five decades of shared struggle" with the people of Karnataka, recalling his journey from Shikaripura to the Chief Minister's office.

"I say again and again that till my final breath, there is no question of retirement. As long as God gives me strength, I will continue working honestly for the organisation, the party, the state and the nation," he said.

He credited farmers, party workers and the public for his rise in politics, and reiterated his ideological grounding in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), saying he was proud to be an RSS worker shaped by its values.

Yediyurappa also praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, claiming India had attained a new global stature under their leadership. Referring to recent developments in West Bengal, he described the BJP's electoral gains there as a "victory for India" and said the successful conduct of elections marked a win for democracy.

He urged that Modi should continue leading the country for at least another decade and said Shah should remain central to strengthening internal security and nation-building. He also pledged to travel across Karnataka to mobilise support for the BJP and its development agenda under the vision of 'Viksit Bharat'.

Addressing the gathering, Amit Shah hailed Yediyurappa as a leader who dedicated his life to ordinary people and played a crucial role in expanding the BJP in southern India. He said Yediyurappa's political journey, from grassroots activism to becoming Chief Minister—had helped establish the party's presence in the region, long considered difficult terrain for the BJP.

Shah also recalled Yediyurappa's refusal in 2014 to join the Union Cabinet, choosing instead to focus on bringing the BJP back to power in Karnataka. He praised his role in promoting Bengaluru as a global technology hub and fostering social harmony across communities.

The Home Minister said a memorial to 18th-century Chitradurga ruler Veera Raja Madakari Nayaka would be built as promised, and lauded the day's event as symbolically significant, coinciding with political developments in West Bengal. *—PTI*

NO RESORT POLITICS

TN Cong MLAs not being shifted to Bengaluru, says DKS

BENGALURU, 9 MAY

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday dismissed reports that Congress MLAs from Tamil Nadu had been shifted to a resort in Karnataka amid post-election political developments in the neighbouring state, saying he was unaware of any such move.

Politicking has intensified in Tamil Nadu after the Assembly election results, with parties engaged in consultations over government formation. Amid speculation about legislators being moved to resorts in other states and ongoing political negotiations, internal party discussions and interactions between senior leaders have continued. However, no official confirmation has been made regarding any such relocation of MLAs.

Rejecting claims that five Tamil Nadu MLAs had arrived at Eagleton Resort near Bengaluru, Shivakumar, who is also the KPCC president, said, "All that is false. No MLAs have come to Eagleton Resort."

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, he added that he had only seen media reports regarding developments in Tamil Nadu and had not received any communication from the Congress high command on the matter.

Responding to questions on the 'Abhimanotsava' being organised to felicitate former Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, he conveyed his wishes and said political differences should not overshadow personal regards. "If it is his birthday, let it be celebrated well. We have all worked with him. In the end, his party people want to organise and honour him. There is nothing wrong with that. I wish him good health," he said. *—PTI*

PROBLEM FOR PEDESTRIANS

A large tree's fallen branch blocks a footpath near KR Circle in Bengaluru creating problems for pedestrians *—Salar News*

DKS announces property ownership drive in City

BENGALURU, 9 MAY

- Shivakumar, who also holds the Bengaluru Development portfolio, said the state government had begun converting B-Khatas into A-Khatas and would organise special Khata camps every Saturday across all corporation limits from 16 May to help all citizens to access and secure their property documents

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar announced a major property ownership drive here aimed at correcting and regularising property records, saying the government had already rectified 23 lakh Khatas and enabled citizens to download their documents online.

Shivakumar, who also holds the Bengaluru Development portfolio, said the state government had begun converting B-Khatas into A-Khatas and would organise special Khata camps every Saturday across corporation limits from 16 May to help citizens secure their property documents.

A Khata is a legal document in Bengaluru certifying that a property complies with all local by-laws, regulations and has paid property taxes to the civic body. "We have already corrected 23 lakh khatas and provided an opportunity for people to download them," he said.

Shivakumar explained that the major campaign has been undertaken in the City to streamline property documentation. The Deputy Chief Minister said between five and 10 centres would be set up in every corporation area as part of the "Khata Andolana" programme and urged citizens to participate in large numbers.

"I appeal to people to safeguard their property documents. We have created an opportunity for all citizens," he said. Shivakumar further claimed that the initiative had drawn national attention and said the Union government had recognised the State with an award for the programme.

"Your Khata is your right. Obtain your Khata and protect yourself from fraud," he said, while urging people to take advantage of the scheme. *—PTI*

PM to attend Art of Living's 45th anniversary in City

BENGALURU, 9 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the 45th anniversary celebrations of The Art of Living in the City on 10 May, officials announced on Saturday. Founded in 1981 by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, The Art of Living has expanded into a global humanitarian and educational organisation operating in 182 countries.

The PM is scheduled to arrive at HAL Airport around 9 am, followed by a felicitation programme organised by BJP functionaries.

At approximately 11am, Modi will attend the organisation's anniversary celebrations and Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's 70th birthday festivities.

A statement noted, "The PM will also inaugurate the newly constructed Dhyan Mandir at The Art of Living International Centre in Bengaluru, a dedicated meditation hall envisioned as a space for inner peace and holistic well-being."

He will also launch The Art of Living's nationwide service initiatives, which include year-long projects focused on mental well-being, rural development, nature conservation, and social transformation.

Ahead of the visit, Bengaluru City Police have arranged extensive traffic controls to facilitate smooth movement. The traffic advisory states, "The movement of all types of vehicles will be temporarily prohibited on the HAL Airport exit road from Old Airport Road to the DGCA office on both sides." *—PTI*

Four killed in car-lorry collision in Tumakuru

TUMAKURU, 9 MAY

Four individuals travelling in a car were killed in a head-on collision with a lorry in Tumakuru district on Saturday, police confirmed. The accident happened near Chigani Palya in Kunigal taluk, involving a car travelling from Tumakuru towards Mandya and a lorry coming from Kunigal towards Tumakuru. The impact of the crash resulted in the immediate death of Kumar Narasimhaswamy, 65, his wife Gayathri, 60, and his sister Gayathri, 55, all residents of Suvarnasandra in Mandya district, police said.

Another person, believed to be the car driver, also died, though his identity remains unconfirmed. The lorry driver escaped injury and was detained by police. According to reports, Kumar, his wife, and sister had visited Devarayanadurga, a hill station and temple town, to celebrate their wedding anniversary.

They were returning home when the accident occurred. Kunigal Inspector Madhya Nayak and his team visited the scene and conducted an inspection. The bodies have been taken to Kunigal Government Hospital. *—PTI*

Father, son killed as car overturns in Mandya district

MANDYA, 9 MAY

A father and son were killed, while a teenage girl sustained serious injuries, after their car overturned on the Bengaluru-Mysuru NH on Saturday. The accident occurred on a bridge near Konanahalli in Mandya district after the driver lost control, police said. The deceased are Kiran, 40 and his son Kishore, 15. Kiran's daughter, Keerthana, 14, was seriously injured in the crash.

Police said the family was returning to their village after attending a wedding in Mysuru when the driver lost control. The victims were residents of Kachigere village in Mandya taluk. The injured girl and the dead have been shifted to Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences (MIMS). —ANI

3 held in crypto-linked money laundering case

BENGALURU, 9 MAY

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested three persons, including alleged crypto hacker Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki, in a cryptocurrency-linked money laundering case, officials said on Saturday.

The other two arrested are Robin Khandelwal and Sunish Hegde. The trio was taken into custody on May 8 and produced before a Bengaluru court, which remanded them to 10 days of ED custody.

Officials said the ED conducted raids on April 20 at multiple locations linked to the accused, as well as premises connected to Mohammed Haris Nalapad and Omar Farook Nalapad, sons of Karnataka Congress MLA N A Haris among others.

Mohammed Haris Nalapad, former Karnataka Youth Congress president, later denied any wrongdoing, stating that a 21-hour ED search at his residence and that of his brother did not yield any incriminating material. He said his family has long been in public life and maintained that their conduct was upright.

The case originates from Karnataka Police FIRs and chargesheets relating to a 2017 cybercrime case involving alleged hacking of national and international websites, theft of bitcoins, and sale of stolen virtual digital assets via crypto platforms by Sriki and associates.

The Haris brothers have also been questioned by the Karnataka Police SIT. Sriki was earlier arrested by state police during the probe.

In 2021, Congress leaders had alleged that he had hacked bitcoins worth Rs 10,000 crore and sought an investigation into possible links with the then BJP government in Karnataka. *—PTI*

IN GAURIBIDANUR

Direct mkt initiative helps ryots with prices

GAURIBIDANUR, 9 MAY

Sugarcane farmers in D. Palya Panchayat set up cooperative jaggery-making units, with four to five farmers operating each alemane *—Salar News*

Farmers in B Bommasandra Gram Panchayat in Gauribidanur taluk of Chikkaballapur district are securing improved returns for produce such as jaggery, millets, fruits and tamarind through a direct marketing initiative aimed at reducing dependence on middlemen.

The region, once known as Bellalu Bommasandra for its large number of traditional alemane (rural jaggery-making units), has historically depended on sugarcane cultivation. However, the closure of Gowri Sugar Mills several years ago severely affected growers, forcing many either to shift crops or turn to jaggery production.

To sustain sugarcane farming, growers in the D. Palya Panchayat region formed cooperative jaggery-making units, with four to five farmers operating each alemane. Around 10 to 12 units began functioning in three shifts using manual labour. Despite steady production, local traders paid only Rs 3,500-Rs 3,600 for a 60-kg bag of jaggery.

The situation changed after a local direct-market initiative was introduced with the support of senior bureaucrat Varaprasad Reddy. Farmers were encouraged to collectively fix prices, while government employees were told to purchase from growers.

A marketplace was subsequently established at Kote School Grounds in Gauribidanur, where jaggery was sold under the brand name "Gowri Sihi." More than 2.5 metric tonnes were sold within two hours, with farmers receiving Rs 4,800 per 60-kg bag, around Rs 1,200 more than previous market rates.

The model has since expanded to other produce. Millets are now marketed as "Gowri Siri", fruits as "Gowri Phala", while tamarind and other farm produce are also being sold directly by farmers in local markets. *—Salar News*

Murdered woman's body recovered from septic tank

MYSURU, 9 MAY

- Recently, Veerabhadra had borrowed Rs 75,000 from Gowramma and promised to return the money within a week. When he failed to return the money, Gowramma began asking him the money

KR Nagar police have arrested a 45-year-old man for allegedly strangulating an elderly woman to death due to dispute over money, in Tippur village of KR Nagar taluk.

According to information reaching here, the incident came to light on Saturday when the police recovered the victim's body from a septic tank in her house.

The deceased has been identified as Gowramma, 90, the wife of Mudlashetty, who was living alone.

She was friendly with one Veerabhadra from the same village who would help her by running errands, taking her to the hospital or banks to withdraw money.

Recently, Veerabhadra had borrowed Rs 75,000 from Gowramma and promised to return the money within a week.

When he failed to return the money, Gowramma began pestering him for the money. Unable to pay back the loan, Veerabhadra went to Gowramma's house last week and strangulated the sleeping woman with a pillow and buried her body in a septic tank in the backyard of her.

On noticing her absence Gowramma's children who lived separately filed a missing person's complaint with the KR Nagar police. As both Gowramma and Veerabhadra were missing from the village after the incident, the police intensified the investigation.

When Veerabhadra returned to village two days ago, he was arrested by the police. During the interrogation, Veerabhadra confessed to murdering Gowramma and burying her body in the septic tank.

SP Mallikarjuna Baladandi, Additional Superintendent of Police C Mallick, DYSP Rajanna rushed to the village and inspected the spot. Police exhumed the body of Gowramma and handed it over for postmortem examination. *—Salar News*

—ANI

AP CM Naidu uses cops to suppress dissent: Jagan

AMARAVATI, 9 MAY

YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has accused Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu of weaponising police as a political tool to suppress dissent, limit freedom of speech and target opponents. Reddy claimed the TDP-led government is systematically curtailing democratic rights, alleging that police intimidate critics, silence opposition voices, and instil fear among citizens questioning the government. He accused the police of targeting social media activists, journalists, and supporters, filing politically motivated complaints, and using questionable legal provisions to harass dissenters. Reddy termed the police demand for removal of content from social media platforms and account suspensions a threat to democracy. —*PTI*

'Centre finished off right to work by ending MGNREGA'

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has criticised the Modi government for abolishing MGNREGA, accusing it of ending the right to work for the poor. Kharge claimed the BJP-led Centre pre-planned the elimination of this employment guarantee. He stated that the number of families receiving work under MGNREGA dropped by 44 lakh in 2025-26, with employment falling by 67 lakh. Kharge added that the full 100 days of work declined by 40.5 per cent, with a 21.5 per cent decrease in person days, leaving families with an income loss of Rs 1,221 on average. He accused the government of withholding funds and imposing additional burdens on resource-strapped states, exposing its true policy towards the poor. —*PTI*

Cong plans 'Yatras' in 117 Punjab Assembly seats

CHANDIGARH, 9 MAY

With elections expected next year, the Congress plans to hold 'yatras' across all 117 Punjab Assembly segments to connect with voters. Congress general secretary Bhupesh Baghel said a three-day 'yatra' will be organised in each constituency to understand local issues and expectations. Baghel presided over a brainstorming session attended by senior leaders. He suggested that the Leader of Opposition, Partap Singh Bajwa, should attend the concluding ceremonies. Baghel also stated the Congress will publish a chargesheet against the AAP government. The party discussed Punjab's "sorry state of affairs, particularly corruption and law and order." —*PTI*

Spokesperson of NCP(SP) faces ink attack in Pune

PUNE, 9 MAY

A group led by 'kirtankar' Sangram Bhandare poured ink on NCP (SP) spokesperson Vikas Lawande, accusing him of targeting spiritual leaders. A viral video shows Bhandare confronting Lawande at Mhatobachi Alandi, demanding an explanation for his "infiltrator" remarks. Bhandare is seen pouring ink and warning Lawande against speaking against revered gurus, saying, "You should have called me that." Lawande claims he was assaulted by "cow vigilantes" in vehicles, who detained him, manhandled him, and brandished a pistol before fleeing. Bhandare later claimed the ink protest was against Lawande's "unfounded allegations" about Hindu spiritual leaders. Rohit Pawar flayed the attack, and criticised the silence during alleged insults to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj by preachers. —*PTI*

Dilip, Agnimitra among 5 in WB Cabinet

The new Cabinet includes ministers embodying Bengal's geographical, ethnic diversity

KOLKATA, 9 MAY

CM Suvendu Adhikari, Dilip Ghosh, Agnimitra Paul, Ashok Kirtania, Kshudiram Tudu, and Nisith Pramanik take the oath during the swearing-in ceremony as party forms government in West Bengal for the first time —*PTI*

West Bengal's newly sworn-in BJP government, led by Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari, unveiled a five-member cabinet on Saturday at the Brigade Parade Grounds, reflecting the state's north–south geographical balance and ethnic diversity. Notably, no minister was drawn from Kolkata, while representation was given to communities such as the Matuas and Santhals.

The cabinet includes five ministers whose profiles span organisational veterans, former union ministers, and community leaders.

Dilip Ghosh, a former RSS pracharak and ex-state BJP president, returns to frontline governance after a turbulent but influential political career. Credited with transforming the BJP from a marginal force into West Bengal's principal opposition, he played a key role in the party's 2019 Lok Sabha surge, when it won 18 seats. After internal rifts and a loss in Bardhaman-Durgapur following constituency reshuffles, Ghosh made a comeback by winning Kharagpur Sadar, re-establishing his grassroots base.

Agnimitra Paul, a fashion designer-turned-politician, continues her rise as one of the BJP's prominent women leaders in Bengal. The Asansol Dakshin MLA first entered the Assembly in 2021 after defeating TMC's Saayoni Ghosh, and retained her seat this election. A former state Mahila Morcha chief and party vice-president, she has been a vocal critic of the Trinamool Congress, highlighting issues of governance, corruption, and political violence. She also contested unsuccessfully in both the 2022 Asansol bypoll and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Nisith Pramanik, once a Trinamool youth leader before joining the BJP in 2018, brings national experience to the state cabinet. He served as Union Minister of State for Home and Youth Affairs from 2021 to 2024 and became the youngest member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's council of ministers. After a setback in the 2024 general election, he returned strongly by winning Mathabhanga in Cooch Behar.

Ashok Kirtania, representing the Matua-dominated Bangaon belt of North 24 Parganas, retained his Bangaon Uttar seat. His victory is seen as significant amid concerns over citizenship and voter list issues affecting Namashudra refugee communities.

Kshudiram Tudu, representing the Santhal tribal community, secured the Ranibandh seat in Bankura, defeating the Trinamool candidate.His decision to take oath in the Santhali language was widely noted as a cultural affirmation for the community. BJP's attempt is to consolidate regional, caste and tribal representation across West Bengal. —*PTI*

Didi asks Oppn to set up 'joint platform' to fight BJP

KOLKATA, 9 MAY

Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee appealed to all opposition parties in West Bengal to come together and form a "joint platform" to fight the BJP.

She also called upon student unions opposed to the BJP and NGOs to unite against the saffron camp.

Her statements came on a day when the BJP's first government in the state was sworn in.

"I call upon all opposition parties, including the Left and the ultra-Left, to come together to form a joint platform against the BJP," she said on Saturday.

She said that she will talk to any political party if they want to hold a dialogue with her in this regard.

"It is not the time to think the enemy's enemy is my friend, our first enemy is the BJP," she said, while speaking to a small gathering in front of her Kalighat residence, while observing poet Rabindranath Tagore's birth anniversary. She said TMC workers faced atrocities. — *PTI*

Modi touches feet of 98-year-old BJP veteran

Prime Minister Modi touched the feet of 98-year-old BJP veteran Makhanlal Sarkar on Saturday and sought his blessings at the swearing-in ceremony of the party's first government in West Bengal.

Sarkar was arrested in Kashmir in 1952 while accompanying Jana Sangh founder Syama Prasad Mookerjee during the movement to hoist the Indian tricolour there, the BJP said.

"Sarkar is one of the early grassroots figures associated with the nationalist movement in India," the BJP said.

Felicitating Sarkar on the stage at the Brigade Parade Grounds here before the oath-taking ceremony of the Adhikari government, the PM hugged the veteran and exchanged pleasantries.

— PTI

Jhalmuri steals spotlight

Jhalmuri, the quintessential Bengali street snack that became an unlikely symbol in the bitter TMC-BJP fight for over a month, found pride of place at the swearing-in of West Bengal's first BJP government at the Brigade Parade Ground on Saturday.

People attending the ceremony made a beeline for 20 BJP jhalmuri stalls at the venue in central Kolkata.

Prime Minister Modi had earlier said the BJP would hold victory celebrations on May 4 with sweets and jhalmuri. Then Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had said she would send bhelpuri to Modi. "I am loving jhalmuri more today because of our heady victory in the election," said Manjari Basu, who came from Tollygunge, in Kolkata to witness the swearing-in ceremony. -PTI

Our support to TVK is to prevent Prez rule in TN: VCK

VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan hands over the letter of support to TVK leader Adhav Arjuna during a meeting, in Chennai —*PTI*

CHENNAI, 9 MAY

Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) chief Thol Thirumavalavan on Saturday announced his party's decision to support Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), led by actor Vijay, in government formation, saying the move was aimed at preventing President's Rule in Tamil Nadu and ensuring the people's mandate for TVK was respected.

He said the decision was taken in view of the current political uncertainty, with TVK short of a simple majority and no other party close to the 118-seat mark needed to form government.

"Due to the prevailing uncertainty in government formation, it was necessary to support TVK in its efforts to form the government," Thirumavalavan said at a press conference after handing over the support letter to TVK general secretary Aadhav Arjuna.

He said the decision was in line with consultations held with Left parties and that it would not affect VCK's ties with the DMK. "Our ties with the DMK will not get affected. This will help Vijay form the government and also prevent President's Rule in the state," he said, adding that DMK chief M K Stalin had been informed and had agreed to the decision.

Thirumavalavan said VCK and Left parties held discussions and arrived at a consensus to extend unconditional support to TVK as part of a long-term political assessment.

"This decision has been made so that VCK does not become an obstacle to Vijay forming the government," he said.

He also said he had urged a post-swearing-in meeting with Vijay. —*PTI*

Invite AIADMK to form govt: Dhinakaran

CHENNAI, 9 MAY

AMMK chief TTV Dhinakaran urged Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar to invite AIADMK's Edappadi K Palaniswami to form the government.

AMMK general secretary said he has submitted a letter to the Governor asking him to invite AIADMK general secretary Palaniswami to form the government and offered his party's lone MLA-designate S Kamaraj's support to the AIADMK with whom his party contested the 23 April Assembly election under the NDA.

Speaking to reporters outside the Lok Bhavan on Friday night, Dhinakaran alleged that he could not reach his party MLA-elect as he appeared to have "gone missing."

"I suspect that the TVK, in a desperate bid to form the government, as it lacked the majority might have indulged in horse-trading," Dhinakaran alleged. He even claimed that he complained to the governor about the issue.

The TVK, however, denied

indulging in any "horse-trading" and said the party leader Vijay would not stoop down to such a low. The party even released a video of Kamaraj signing the letter, which Kamaraj later denied.

Meanwhile, after three days' stay at a Puducherry resort, over 40 AIADMK MLAs came to meet their party's general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami at his residence on Saturday.

They were asked to stay at resort allegedly to prevent them from "cross-voting or defections," as Vijay-led TVK is busy shoring up numbers.

PMK founder Ramadoss demanded the governor call Vijay-led TVK, single largest party in the state, to form the government. —*PTI*

Congress top brass discusses govt formation in Kerala

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Top Congress leadership on Saturday got into a huddle to decide on the government formation and select chief ministerial candidate in Kerala, where the United Democratic Front (UDF) won a thumping majority in the just concluded assembly polls.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge convened a meeting of top party leaders from Kerala, where former party chief Rahul Gandhi, AICC general secretary in-charge for Kerala Deepa Dasmunshi and AICC general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal were present,

besides Congress' Kerala unit chief Sunny Joseph, leader of opposition in the outgoing assembly V D Satheesan and former Leader of Opposition Ramesh Chennithala.

The top leadership is believed to have discussed the report of the party observers for Kerala, sources said.

Kerala Congress chief Sunny Joseph told reporters before the meeting that discussions would be held at Kharge's residence and the party high command would announce name of the chief minister.

Sources said a majority of the party MLAs support making Venugopal the chief minister.

Meanwhile, Kerala Congress (M) chairman Jose K Mani said multiple reasons for the defeat were identified at the meeting, but no one alleged that the LDF government had lagged in development activities. -PTI

'UDF allies can interfere in Cong affairs'

KASARAGOD, 9 MAY

Congress MP Rajmohan Unnithan on Saturday said that all constituents of the United Democratic Front (UDF), including the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), have the right to express views on internal Congress matters, including the choice of the next Kerala Chief Minister, as they are part of a "team".

He also said the Congress too has the right to comment on IUML's internal affairs, and rejected the argument made by Congress MLA Mathew Kuzhalnadan that allies cannot interfere in each other's decisions. Unnithan's remarks triggered a sharp response from the BJP, which alleged that the Congress had "surrendered" to the IUML, claiming it now effectively controlled the UDF.

Speaking in Kasaragod, Unnithan cited Congress victories in northern Kerala seats, including Rahul Gandhi from Wayanad, and said it was unreasonable to claim the IUML should not express opinions. He said all UDF partners, including Kerala Congress (KEC) and RSP, were entitled to voice views on leadership issues.

He also flayed internal protests over Chief Ministerial aspirations. —*PTI*

ALLEGATION BY 17-YEAR-OLD GIRL

Union Minister Sanjay's son booked under POCSO

HYDERABAD, 9 MAY

Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar's son Bhageerath said out of fear he paid Rs 50,000 to girl's father —*INSTAGRAM*

A case under POCSO was registered against Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar's son here after allegations of sexual harassment of a minor girl, a charge denied by the accused who alleged extortion and criminal intimidation by the teen and her parents.

The 17-year-old girl's mother said Sanjay's son Bhageerath, who was in a relationship with her daughter, sexually harassed her. The relationship began about eight months ago, police said.

They are yet to examine the girl, who is a student.

Meanwhile, Bhageerath complained to the police in Karimnagar that the girl had invited him to her family functions.

An FIR was registered based on the complaint.

Bhageerath said in his complaint that thinking the girl's family to be trustworthy, he had visited some holy places with them and his friends.

Subsequently, the girl and her parents asked him to marry her, but he rejected the proposal, and the girl's parents demanded money and also threatened him with false complaints if he failed to pay up.

He said that out of fear he had paid Rs 50,000 to the girl's father, but they demanded Rs 5 crore. The girl's mother had threatened to commit suicide if he did not pay, Bhageerath said in his complaint. — *PTI*

BJP's response to jobless youth is lathis: Rahul

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday claimed that unemployment is the biggest disease in India and the BJP's response to unemployed youth is lathis.

"Yesterday in Patna, teacher aspirants who were peacefully protesting for their right to employment were brutally beaten by the Bihar Police again. BJP's response to unemployed youth: Lathis," he said in a post in Hindi on X.

Rahul Gandhi claimed that unemployment is impacting the youth of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, who are beaten up brutally when they take to the streets to seek their right to employment.

The leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha shared videos of the protesting youth being beaten up by the police in Patna when they were seeking jobs.

He alleged that the BJP government did not care for unemployed youth. "Unemployment is the biggest disease in India today, and its most devastating impact is falling on the youth of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Millions of youth, armed with degrees and skills in hand, are wandering from door to door.

● Rahul Gandhi claimed that unemployment is impacting the youth of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, who are beaten up brutally when they take to the streets to seek their right

"India's youth are fed up with the BJP's lies, they will not stay silent. Congress stands with them. —*PTI*

—ANI

Threat to R'than collector leads to Kerala probe

THIRU'PURAM, 9 MAY

Police have launched an investigation after a hoax email sent to a Rajasthan District Collector claimed blasts would occur at collectorates and courts across Kerala. Thiruvananthapuram City Cyber Police registered a case on Friday, after receiving the email on 6 May, from the Rajasthan Bikaner Collector's official email. The email, written in Hindi, threatened explosions across Kerala. Rajasthan Police alerted Kerala authorities, leading to security checks, which confirmed the threat was a hoax. The Cyber Police are investigating to identify the sender, suspected to have used a dark web platform. The case is registered under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Information Technology Act and the Kerala Police Act. —*PTI*

Ex-IMA chief held in gender testing, abortion racket

MUMBAI, 9 MAY

Dr Ravindra Kute, former President of the Indian Medical Association's Maharashtra chapter, has been arrested for alleged involvement in illegal abortions and sex determination tests, police said. The operation uncovered a racket spanning Pune and Ahilyanagar involving doctors, agents, and relatives, violating the PCPNDT Act. Dr Kute was detained in Rahata on Wednesday and is in police custody. So far, 12 arrests include two doctors and three agents. The IMA Maharashtra clarified it does not protect members violating laws. "The police and the court will carry out legal processes based on evidence," it said. —*PTI*

—PTI

SC to hear PIL on regulating edu for kids under 14

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

The Supreme Court will hear a PIL on 11 May seeking regulation of institutions imparting education or religious instructions to children below 14. Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma will hear the plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, through Ashwani Dubey. The petition seeks directions for registration, recognition, supervision, and monitoring of all such institutions under Articles 21A, 39(f), 45, and 51-A(k). It argues that Article 30 does not grant extra rights to minorities beyond Article 19(1)(g), emphasising the need for oversight to prevent brainwashing. Upadhyay claims unrecognised institutions operate across UP's border areas without regulation. —*PTI*

Hidden camera found on railway signal in Vaishali

HAJIPUR, 9 MAY

Security personnel were alarmed when they discovered a suspicious camera installed on a railway signal in Bihar's Vaishali district, officials said on Saturday. The hidden camera, which had a SIM card, was set up on a railway signal near the Sarai railway station. The Government Railway Police (GRP), Muzaffarpur section, has registered a case and is investigating the matter."Forensic experts are examining the device. Those who installed the camera will soon be apprehended," SP, GRP Muzaffarpur, Beena Kumari said.The SP, however, denied reports claiming the recovered camera was being controlled from outside the state. —*PTI*

Lt Gen Subramani is CDS; Krishna to head Navy

Subramani Pak-China expert, Krishna comm specialist

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani (retd) has been named India's next Chief of Defence Staff and his primary mandate will be to implement the military theaterization plan and boost tri-services synergy.

The government has also appointed Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan as the next Chief of Naval Staff.

While Lt Gen Subramani will replace Gen Anil Chauhan as the country's senior-most military commander, Vice Admiral Swaminathan will succeed Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, an official statement said.

Widely known as an expert on Pakistan and China, Lt Gen Subramani retired as the Vice Chief of Army Staff on 31 July 2025 and is serving as military adviser to the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS). He will take over as the Chief of Defence Staff on 30 May.

Lt Gen (Retd) NS Raja Subramani

Vice Adm Swaminathan —*PTI*

Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, heading the Western Naval Command, will take charge on 31 May.

Lt Gen Subramani has held several command, staff and instructional appointments.

He is a graduate of the National Defence Academy and the Indian Military Academy.He was commissioned into the eighth battalion of the Garhwal Rifles on 14 December 1985. Lt Gen Subramani is an alumnus of the Joint Services Command and Staff College, Bracknell (UK), and the National Defence College, New Delhi. As Navy Chief, Vice Admiral Swaminathan's focus is likely to be supervising modernisation of the force. — *PTI*

- Widely known as an expert on Pakistan and China, Lt Gen Subramani retired as the Vice Chief of Army Staff on 31 July 2025. As Navy Chief, Vice Admiral Swaminathan's focus is likely to be modernisation of the Navy and making it capable of tackling all possible threats

ED RAIDS

Centre playing 'dangerous games' in Punjab, says Mann

CHANDIGARH, 9 MAY

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann alleged that the Centre is playing "dangerous games" in Punjab as he slammed it after the ED conducted fresh raids on premises linked to Punjab Industries Minister Sanjeev Arora.

He also accused the Centre of using agencies like the ED and the CBI as "weapons" to achieve political ends.

Mann also accused the BJP of engaging in "divisive and politics of hatred," and called it "Bharat Jalao Party."

He said the BJP is playing "dangerous games" with Punjab, but the state won't let them do so.

Addressing a news conference in Sangrur, Mann said agencies like the ED, CBI and the Income Tax Department are " at the BJP's disposal that have been politicised."

"For a long time, they have

been using them for their politics. Be it Maharashtra, Odisha, Bihar, Karnataka, West Bengal. Now, Punjab is their target," CM Mann said. The ED conducted searches on Saturday against Arora and some others allegedly linked to him as part of an investigation into a newly registered money laundering case, officials said. They said Arora's residence in Chandigarh is among the five raided.

The searches were launched after the ED registered a fresh case under the criminal sections of the PMLA. — *PTI*

Three women critical after C-sections at Kota govt hospital

The source of the infection has not been found yet. The district administration has so far maintained silence —*SCREENGRAB*

KOTA, 9 MAY

The condition of three of the four women undergoing treatment for kidney infection they contracted after caesarean deliveries at a government hospital and medical college here remained critical on Friday.

The fourth woman has indicated signs of recovery after dialysis, with satisfactory discharge of urine, officials said.

Meanwhile, the cause of the fatal infection has not been ascertained yet. The district administration has so far maintained silence on the inquiry and action taken.

The Rajasthan government has sent a high-level team from Jaipur. The team is coordinating with local doctors in treating the four women, the additional principal of the hospital, Dr RP Meena said.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The Rajasthan government has taken disciplinary action against medical staff after the death of two women who underwent caesarean operations at the New Medical College Hospital in Kota, officials said on Friday.

A senior doctor and two nursing personnel have been suspended, while a contractual (UTB) doctor has been dismissed. Show-cause notices have been issued to two other doctors also, they said.

Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma has directed a probe into the incident, officials said. — *PTI*

Film director charged for 'sexually assaulting' model

KOCHI, 9 MAY

The Kerala Police said on Saturday that they had registered a case against an associate film director for allegedly "sexually assaulting" a model here.

The case was registered against Jojo Kurishinkal of Chengannur in Alappuzha district at the Maradu police station on 6 May.

Kurishinkal has worked in several films as an assistant and associate director.

The FIR says that the complainant, a model based in Kochi, met Kurishinkal through a dating app in July 2023.

The FIR stated that the accused told the complainant he was a film director and had separated from his wife before proposing marriage to her.

He later allegedly assured the complainant and her mother that he would go ahead with the marriage once the legal procedures related to his divorce were completed, the FIR said.

According to the FIR, the accused later invited the complainant to his apartment in Vyttila on 18 April 2024, where he "sexually assaulted" her.

The FIR alleged that he continued to sexually harass the woman thereafter. It also stated that the accused had "physically assaulted" the complainant on many occasions and later refused to marry her.

Based on the complaint, police registered a case under Section 376(2)(n) of IPC for repeatedly "raping" the woman.

Police said the woman's confidential statement would be recorded, and the suspect would be summoned for questioning. — *PTI*

40-YEAR-OLD MAN HELD FOR RAPING MINOR ON TRAIN

KOLLAM, 9 MAY

A 40-year-old man has been arrested for "sexually assaulting" a minor Tamil girl on a train while she was returning to her native place with her grandfather, police said on Saturday.

The incident occurred in the wee hours of Thursday in the general compartment of the Palaruvi Express while she was sleeping on the floor beside her grandfather, police said.

"The family had come for a pilgrimage to the Edathua Church and was returning home to Tenkasi when the incident occurred," an officer of the Punalur railway police station said.

The accused, a Kollam native, allegedly took the sleeping girl to his seat and sexually assaulted her, the officer said. "The act was recorded by a woman sitting nearby, who raised an alarm. By then, the train had entered Tamil Nadu, and the accused got off at Sengottai," the officer said.

Subsequently, the statements of the victim and her parents were recorded, a photograph of the accused was obtained, and an investigation was launched.

The accused, who works at a chicken shop, was arrested from Kollam on Friday and booked under POCSO and the BNS, police said.

He was remanded to 15 days judicial custody on Saturday. — *PTI*

Kerala auto driver spikes woman's drink, rapes her

PATHANAMTHITTA, 9 MAY

An auto rickshaw driver was arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a woman after drugging her with spiked juice at Adoor, police said on Saturday.

The arrested man Vinod, is a native of Adoor. He had gone into hiding after the police registered a case against him.

Police said the 28-year-old victim was living separately from her husband near Vinod's house.

Police officials at Adoor police station said the woman used to hire Vinod's auto rickshaw.

In February 2026, the accused allegedly drugged the woman with spiked juice and sexually assaulted her, police said.

Police said that he later recorded videos of the victim and sexually harassed her many times. As Vinod continued to threaten to share the videos on social media, the victim informed her husband. Police said that in a fit of rage, Vinod also allegedly assaulted the woman, following which she approached the police and lodged a complaint last month. — PTI

EAM, Trinidad PM decide to beef up ties

PORT OF SPAIN, 9 MAY

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held comprehensive talks with Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar to explore new initiatives for expanding cooperation between India and the dual-island nation.

Jaishankar arrived in Port of Spain from Paramaribo on Friday on the concluding leg of his three-nation tour of Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, aimed at deepening India's engagement with the Caribbean nations.

"Sat down this evening with PM Kamla Persad-Bissessar and her Cabinet colleagues for a review of our ties," Jaishankar said in a social media post on Friday.

Earlier, Jaishankar joined Persad-Bissessar at an event for the distribution of Made-in-India laptops to schoolchildren, describing it as the fulfilment of a commitment made by Prime Minister Modi last year.

He concluded agreements on tourism, solarisation of the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs building, Quick Impact Projects and the establishment of an Ayurveda Chair. — *PTI*

The President of the Trinidad and Tobago Senate, Wade Mark (left extreme), TT PM Kamla Persad-Bissessar (2nd from left), External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Speaker of the TT House of Representatives Jagdeo Singh (right extreme) during the EAM's tour —*PTI*

FOOD POISONING HITS 100 IN R'THAN

JAIPUR, 9 MAY

More than 100 people fell ill allegedly due to food poisoning after consuming sweets prepared at a wedding function in Rajasthan's Kotputli-Behror district. The incident occurred in Dhani Gaskan village of Viratnagar area, where 105 villagers, including children, complained of vomiting and stomach pain after eating sweets served during the ceremony, officials said.

The sweets, including rasmalai, were prepared for the function on Thursday night and were distributed to locals on Friday. The affected people were admitted to the community health centre in Atela. Doctors later referred 16 children and 14 adults to Shahpura community health centre for further treatment.

Sub-Divisional Officer Kapil Kumar Upadhyay said all patients were given timely treatment, and most were later discharged after their condition improved.

"Food samples have been collected by the food safety department and sent to the laboratory for examination," he said. Administrative and health department officials reached the spot after receiving information about the incident. —*PTI*

FIGHT FOR RIGHTS

Dalit bride forced to dismount mare, villagers demand action

JAIPUR, 9 MAY

What should have been a moment of celebration for a young bride in a village near Udaipur has turned into a political campaign for rights after she was forced to dismount a mare she was riding.

On 29 April, in Hariau village, Pooja Meghwal, a Dalit bride, was riding a mare for her wedding, when some local strongmen forced her to dismount.

"Some people forced me to dismount. My relatives were assaulted," Meghwal told reporters.

Villagers say the incident lingered far beyond the wedding day, with many describing it as a deeply humiliating experience.

The incident gained traction online while locally, the incident took on a more visible form.

On Thursday, members of BSP and people from the Dalit community gathered in large numbers at the municipal premises before marching to the district collectorate in Udaipur. Meghwal joined them at the collectorate, where she came riding the mare again. The protesters raised slogans against the administration and submitted a memorandum addressed to the governor, demanding a fair probe.

They said that around a dozen people, including some women, were involved in the incident, but only four arrests have been made so far.

They also questioned the fairness of the investigation and demanded that the probe be handed over to another officer. — *PTI*

Fast patrol vessel 'Achal' commissioned into ICG

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) 'Achal' was commissioned into the Indian Coast Guard on Saturday, officials said.

'Achal' is the fifth one in a series of eight FPVs being constructed by Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) for the coast guard.

The new-generation Adamya-class fast patrol vessel was commissioned into the ICG at the Goa Shipyard Limited, An ICG spokesperson said.

The ship was formally commissioned by A Anbarasu, additional secretary and director general (acquisition), of the defence ministry, in the presence of Inspector General Tekur Sashi Kumar, Commander Coast Guard Region (North West), senior officials of the central and state governments, and representatives from GSL.

The ship will be stationed at Vadinar in Gujarat operating under the administrative and operational control of the Commander, Coast Guard Region (North West), the spokesperson said.

The vessel will undertake surveillance, Search and Rescue (SAR), anti-smuggling operations, and pollution response, reinforcing the Indian Coast Guard's role in safeguarding India's eastern maritime frontier. — *PTI*

Two women claim they got married, seek police protection

GURUGRAM, 9 MAY

A same-sex relationship involving a Hindu and a Muslim woman living in Ward 19 of Sohna has become a topic of discussion in the area, officials said on Saturday.

The matter came to light on Friday after relatives of the two women filed an online complaint with the local police. A team reached Khatikwada Mohalla to investigate the matter along with family members, police said.

The two women told the police that they had been friends for a long time and wanted to live together. They also claimed that they had got married at a temple and sought protection from the administration.

Both the women are originally from Delhi and have been living in Ward 19 of Sohna for some time. — *PTI*

Didi's bete noire Suvendu, a man for many seasons

Suvendu Adhikari with Mamata Banerjee back in the day —PTI

Very few in West Bengal were taken aback when, on Friday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah formally anointed one of BJP's most prominent faces, Suvendu Adhikari, as the leader of the party's legislative wing in the state – a decisive move that all but cleared the path for him to be sworn in as the state's ninth and the BJP's first chief minister on Saturday, amid mounting political anticipation and high drama.

In many ways, Adhikari earned the distinction, having dealt two resounding electoral blows to TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee within the span of five years – first in his own backyard of Nandigram during the 2021 assembly elections, and then, perhaps even more symbolically, in Banerjee's so-called "impregnable" bastion of Bhabanipur in the recently concluded polls.

His victories, coupled with his pivotal role in orchestrating the BJP's watershed triumph in Bengal, firmly cemented his stature as one among the primary architects of the party's remarkable ascent in the state.

Indeed, Adhikari's political journey has been marked as much by confrontation as by calculation, most notably during his five-year tenure as the Leader of the Opposition, when he emerged as the principal challenger to the regime of Mamata Banerjee.

From fierce legislative battles to relentless agitations within the precincts of the Assembly, Adhikari, as the Leader of the Opposition, positioned himself at the forefront of the BJP's campaign against the government's policies and legislations, often dominating proceedings with combative speeches and charged interventions on the floor of the House.

That turbulent phase, however, was not without backlashes. In repeated confrontations with the erstwhile TMC establishment, Adhikari, along with several BJP legislators, endured the ignominy of multiple suspensions from the Assembly, punitive measures that came to symbolise the deepening acrimony between the treasury and opposition benches.

While some suspensions extended through the entirety of an ongoing session of the House, others were equally severe in their own right. One such instance, in February 2025, saw Adhikari barred from the Assembly for an uninterrupted period of 30 days, underscoring the extraordinary intensity of the political face-offs that came to define that period in the state's legislative history.

Outside the assembly too, Adhikari remained at the forefront of the BJP's street resistance against the ruling TMC regime in West Bengal. From spearheading protests over the alleged post-poll violence following the 2021 assembly elections to leading marches towards state secretariat 'Nabanna' and mobilising cadres over issues of corruption, unemployment and law and order, Adhikari consistently positioned himself at the centre of the party's political offensives.

He played a particularly aggressive role during the agitation surrounding the School Service Commission (SSC) recruitment scam, repeatedly targeting the government over allegations of systemic corruption and demanding accountability at the highest levels.

As political tensions deepened across the state, Adhikari emerged as the BJP's principal mobiliser during some of Bengal's most volatile flashpoints.

During the 2023 panchayat elections, he led sustained protests over alleged electoral violence and intimidation, while in 2024 he became one of the most visible faces of the party's agitation over the unrest in Sandeshkhali, accusing the ruling establishment of shielding local strongmen and suppressing dissent.

He also fronted the party's protests in the aftermath of the outrage surrounding RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, seeking to transform public anger into a broader movement against the state government.

Through rallies, dharnas, Assembly confrontations and statewide campaigns, Adhikari steadily cultivated the image of a combative opposition leader who remained at the forefront of virtually every major BJP agitation in Bengal ever since he switched camps from the Trinamool to the BJP in December, 2020.

Adhikari also embodies, almost perfectly, the template earlier articulated by Shah during his campaign trail – that the BJP's chief ministerial face in Bengal would be a son of the soil, born and raised in the state, shaped by its culture, and educated through the Bengali-medium system.

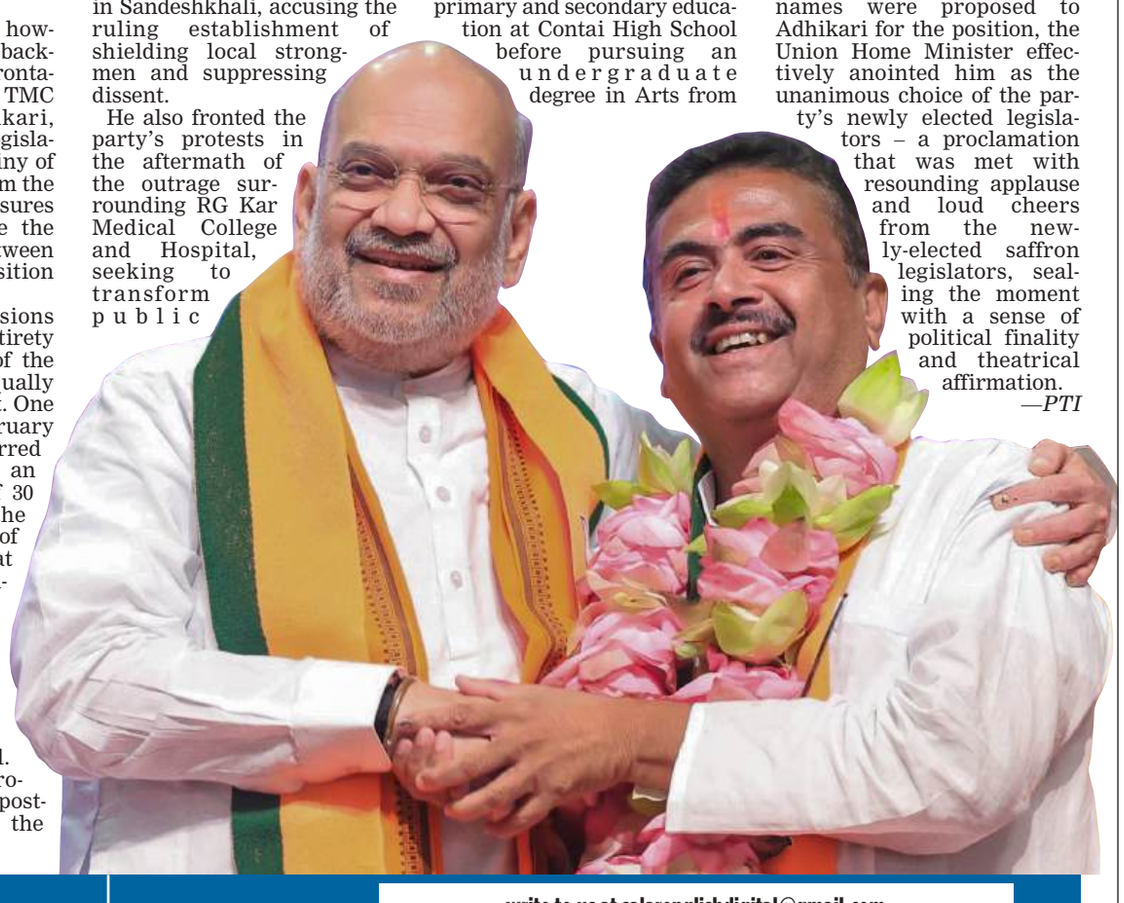
Born in Karkuli village in Purba Medinipur district to veteran politician Sisir Adhikari and Gayatri Adhikari, Adhikari's formative years were marked by his primary and secondary education at Contai High School before pursuing an undergraduate degree in Arts from Prabhat Kumar College in the same region.

He later earned a Master's degree in History from Kolkata's Rabindra Bharati University, a trajectory that reinforced his image as a quintessential Bengali political figure whose rise was forged not outside, but from within the heartland of the state itself.

As far as experience in state administration is concerned, Adhikari happens to be the most conversant of BJP leaders in the state, who functioned as minister of transport from May 2016 to November 2020, and also a minister of the environment department from 2018 to 2020 in the erstwhile Mamata Banerjee cabinet.

It was against this charged backdrop that Shah, following the meeting of the BJP's legislative party in Kolkata, made what many had already begun to anticipate as an inevitability rather than a decision.

Declaring that no alternative names were proposed to Adhikari for the position, the Union Home Minister effectively anointed him as the unanimous choice of the party's newly elected legislators – a proclamation that was met with resounding applause and loud cheers from the newly-elected saffron legislators, sealing the moment with a sense of political finality and theatrical affirmation. —PTI



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SALAR ساڈا

Trump claims he's 'winning' against Iran, but here's the report card

The more convincing reason Donald Trump abandoned Project Freedom is that it was already clear it would not solve the crisis —PTI

Two months into the war in Iran, the reasons the US gave for launching this conflict – and Washington's minimum criteria for claiming success – now appear unintelligible. So much so that US officials are now arguing the war had actually ended in America's favour almost a month ago, when the ceasefire came into effect.

It is hard to think of a more damning indictment of Donald Trump's catastrophic war in Iran than the spectacle of his secretary of state, Marco Rubio, telling reporters on 5 May that the main goal now was to get the Strait of Hormuz "back to the way it was: anyone can use it, no mines in the water, nobody paying tolls".

This, he argued, was an entirely separate defensive and humanitarian operation and would only become a war if US ships came under fire, which they in fact did that same day. Rubio ignored the obvious contradiction that the humanitarian operation had been necessitated by the very war he was simultaneously presenting as already won.

Things took an even more absurd turn later that day. Trump announced he was suspending "Project Freedom", his plan for the US Navy to escort tankers out of the strait, after just one day. The US president cited "great progress" toward an agreement with Iran. As has happened several times now, global stock markets rallied before falling back again.

While few doubt Trump is desperate to put this disastrous war behind him, particularly before heading to Beijing on 14 May, he massively oversold the impression of a breakthrough. The Iranians were merely considering a 14-point proposal for 30 days of negotiations aimed at finding a durable end to the war.

The more convincing reason Trump abandoned Project Freedom is that it was already clear it would not solve the crisis. Most owners of the 1,500 ships currently stranded behind the strait were unwilling to risk passage even with a naval escort. Iran's response, attacking shipping and launching missiles at the United Arab Emirates, has also threatened the ceasefire itself.

Washington's problem is that the Iranians will probably insist talks can only begin, and the Strait of Hormuz reopened, if Trump agrees to end the economic blockade of Iranian maritime trade. The US blockade is inflicting serious damage on the Iranian economy.

Apart from anything else, Iranian officials see ending the blockade as logical reciprocity. But they also understand time is running out before the closure of the strait causes lasting structural damage to the global economy – if it has not already. This gives them enhanced leverage at the moment.

Yet even if negotiations begin, the same problem that prevented a deal before the war remains. Trump lacks the detailed and institutionalised policy apparatus of his predecessor, Barack Obama, whose 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran the current US president so desperately wants to outdo. Obama's deal took 20 months of intense wrangling to complete. Trump has neither the patience, technical expertise, nor direct diplomatic connections to achieve the same.

Added to this are new conditions created by the war itself. The fragmentation of Iran's decision-making process and the empowerment of elites with an even higher tolerance for military and economic pressure have introduced uncertainty into the equation.

And Iran has now realised the increased leverage it has through its ability to close a critical artery of the global economy.

Colossal failure

The answer to the nuclear issue may lie in a fudge. Iran could well agree to a moratorium on uranium enrichment while not yet agreeing to ship out or dilute its enriched uranium – though without ruling that out in order to prolong negotiations.

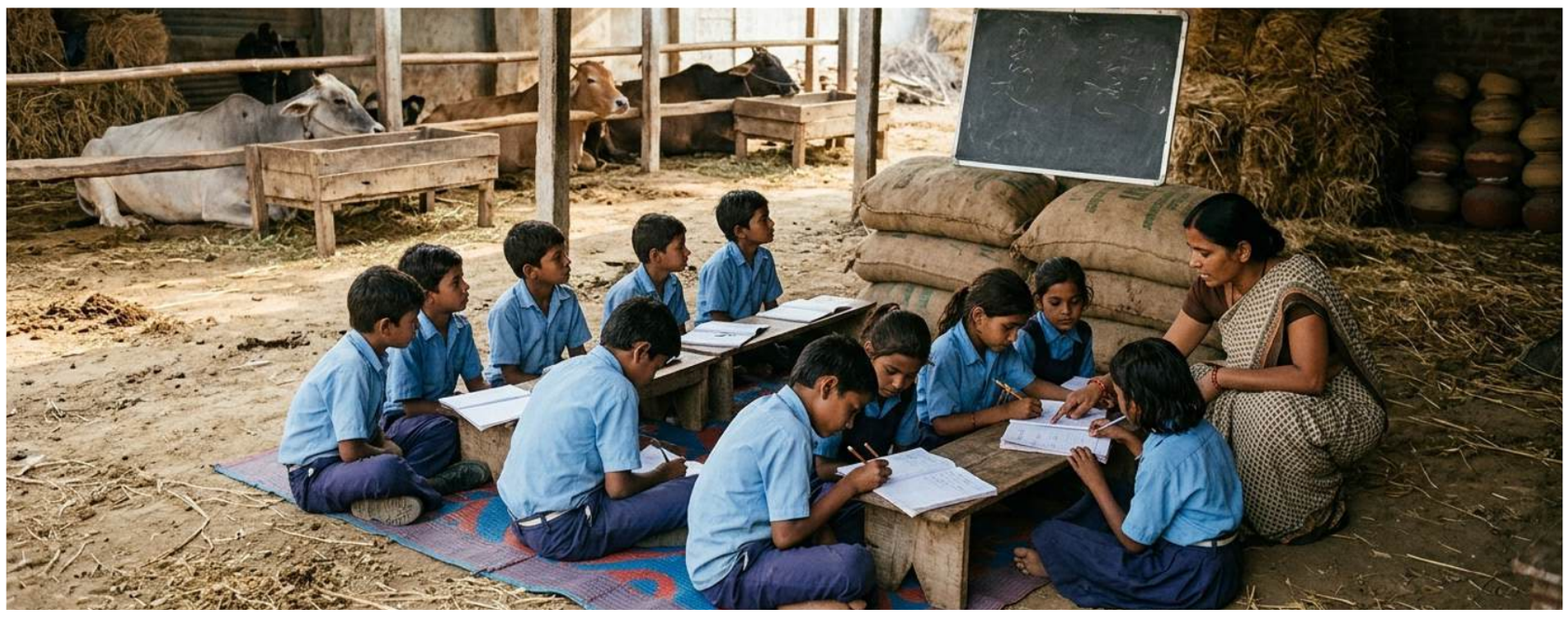
If slightly more moderate heads in Tehran prevail – and that remains a very big if – it would be an obvious concession to make. Iran's geographic advantages and ballistic missile capabilities have established a credible deterrent against future attack.

The question is whether anything short of total surrender on the nuclear issue is acceptable to Trump, and whether he is willing to resist inevitable Israeli opposition to blurring this red line. If not, he has already threatened to resume bombing at a "much higher intensity" than before.

Trump's shifting aims for the war and desperate scramble for an exit underscore that this entire enterprise has been a colossal strategic failure. It will define his legacy, reshape the Middle East and impose further misery on the Iranian people – the very opposite of what he has repeatedly said he wants to do.

The war has shattered confidence among US regional allies that Washington can protect them. It has also alienated traditional US allies who were blamed and then punished for failing to solve a problem they neither created nor could resolve. —*The Conversation*

Classrooms in cowsheds leaves Haryana right's panel alarmed



The school is functioning only due to temporary permission granted by a private landowner, reflecting a complete absence of permanent government infrastructure —AI

The Haryana Human Rights Commission (HHRC) has taken serious note of alarming conditions of government primary schools in Nuh district and has initiated suo motu proceedings in the matter.

Taking cognisance of news reports published on 6 May, the Commission has sought detailed reports from the authorities. The HHRC observed that the conditions described in the news reports are extremely grave and prima facie amount to serious violation of children's right to education, right to health and right to live with dignity.

According to the facts placed before the Full Commission comprising Chairperson Justice Lalit Batra and members Kuldip Jain and Deep Bhatia, several government primary schools in Ferozepur Jhirka area of Nuh are functioning without proper buildings.

The Government Primary School in the Kubda Bas village, is reportedly operating from a cattle shed where approximately 29 boys and 33 girls from 'Balvatika' (pre-primary) to Class 3 are studying.

After school hours, cows and buffaloes are tied in the same premises and cattle fodder is also stored there. Despite cleaning of the premises, foul smell persists, adversely affecting the health and learning environment of children.

It has further been reported that the school is functioning only due to temporary permission granted by a private landowner, reflecting a complete absence of permanent government infrastructure. The school is reportedly one among at least 19 schools in the district that are functioning without buildings.

Similarly, the Government Primary School in Kalu Bas village, is functioning in an open field where about 45 boys and 50 girls are being taught on blackboards tied to trees. During monsoon, the entire field becomes muddy, while in winters the children are forced to study in extreme cold, making learning highly unsafe. The commission observed that such conditions amount to a serious compromise with the safety and dignity of children.

The HHRC said the news reports further revealed that although 68 new schools were sanctioned in Nuh district in 2020, several schools are yet to be provided with basic infrastructure.

In many cases, the land identified for schools is situated far away from villages.

The Full Commission, in the order dated 7 May, also expressed serious concern regarding acute shortage of teachers.

In an attempt to address the shortage, contractual teachers were appointed through Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam from distant districts such as Bahadurgarh, Rewari and Mahendergarh, adversely affecting regular attendance and continuity in teaching.

The commission observed that, as far as practicable, teachers should be appointed or deployed from local or nearby areas, to ensure regular attendance, better coordination with the community and effective delivery of education.

In its order, the HHRC observed that forcing children to study in cattle sheds, open fields or dilapidated structures is not only a violation of children's human rights but also in direct contravention with provisions of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. The act mandates that primary schools must be located within 1 km of habitation.

The commission further observed that the present conditions are inconsistent with India's international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees to children the right to education and health in a safe and dignified environment.

In particular, Article 28 recognises the child's right to education, while Article 29 emphasises the need for a safe and dignified environment for the development of children's personality, talent and physical and mental abilities.

The Commission observed that providing safe, hygienic and adequate educational infrastructure is not merely an administrative responsibility but a fundamental obligation of the state. —PTI

— PTI

Top Lankan monk arrested for sexual abuse of minor

COLOMBO, 9 MAY

One of Sri Lanka's senior most Buddhist monks has been arrested for the sexual abuse of a minor girl, the police said on Saturday. Venerable Pallegama Hemarathana, 71, is the chief priest of a prominent temple in the country. He was taken into custody on Friday night after a magistrate's court in the holy city of Anuradhapura issued an arrest warrant against him and the victim's mother for allegedly aiding and abetting child abuse. The victim is a girl who is now 15 years old, according to the police, who was allegedly abused in the premises of a temple in Anuradhapura, police spokesperson FT Wootler told reporters. —*PTI*

3 Indian men convicted of murder in Canada

ABBOTSFORD, 9 MAY

Three Indian-origin men have been convicted of first-degree murder by a Canadian court over the killing of Arnold and Joanne De Jong in Abbotsford, CBC News reported. The couple was found dead in their home in May 2022. Justice Brenda Brown ruled that Gurkaran Singh, Abhijeet Singh, and Khushveer Toor played active roles in the murders, which prosecutors said were financially motivated. The defence argued the deaths resulted from a robbery gone wrong, but the judge rejected this. The accused, all in their twenties, had pleaded not guilty. Evidence included DNA, rope, a baseball bat, and internet searches about Canadian punishments. Sentencing is set for 28 May.—*PTI*

Trump admin trying to curb free speech: ABC

NEW YORK, 9 MAY

ABC has accused the Trump administration of trying to curb its constitutionally protected free speech and hinder political discussion. The point of contention: The popular show "The View", and whether it's subject to equal time rules. ABC's filing to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), made public Friday, came in a dispute involving one ABC station in Houston, KTRK-TV. The wording indicated the network was a broader battle with the administration. The commission replied, in a statement that the FCC will review Disney's assertion that 'The View' is a bona fide news program', thus exempt from the political equal time rules.—*PTI*

Iran reviews US deal at 'own pace': Report

US breaching ceasefire could have catastrophic consequences, says Iran to UN

TEHRAN/WASHINGTON, 9 MAY

Iran has said it is reviewing a United States proposal linked to ongoing negotiations over the West Asia conflict "at its own pace", amid rising tensions over alleged ceasefire violations, naval actions in the Gulf and renewed diplomatic efforts.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said Tehran would respond "at the appropriate time", dismissing pressure from Washington over deadlines. "The deadlines set by American politicians mean nothing," he said, adding that Iranian institutions, including Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Supreme National Security Council, were examining the proposal before any final approval by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

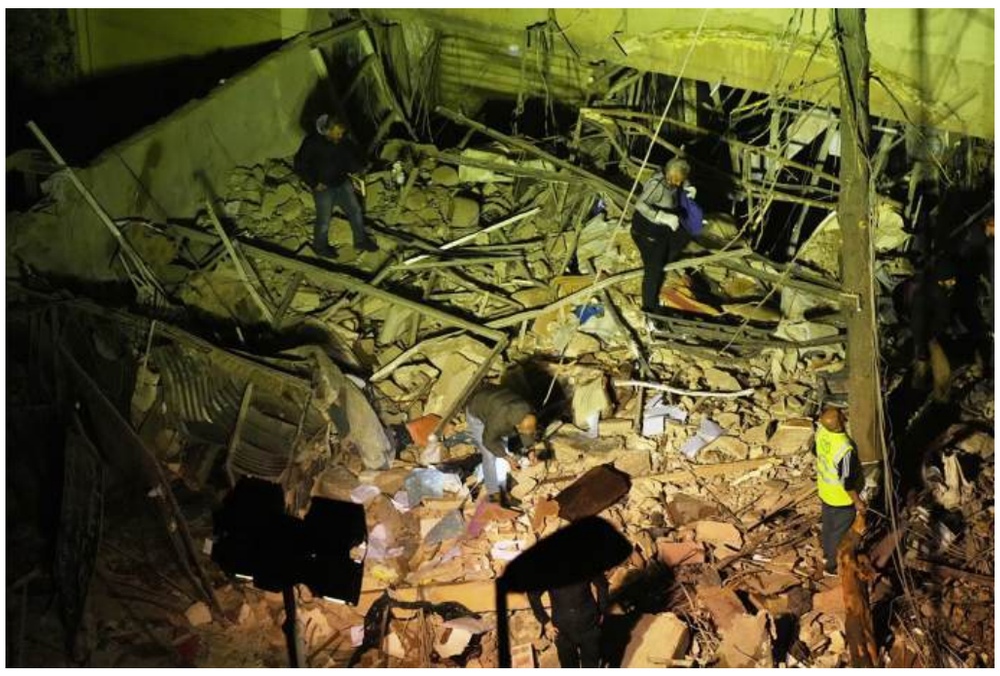
The comments came after US President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Washington expected a response from Tehran on Friday regarding a proposal aimed at ending the conflict. Rubio said the Iranian system appeared "highly fractured", which could be slowing the process.

According to reports, the proposed one-page, 14-point memorandum of understanding could pave the way for talks in Islamabad as early as next week. The draft reportedly covers Iran's nuclear programme, tensions in the Strait of Hormuz and the possible transfer of Iran's highly enriched uranium stockpiles abroad, though sanctions relief remains a major sticking point.

Meanwhile, Iran sharply criticised recent US actions in the Gulf. In a letter to the United Nations, Iran's envoy Amir-Saeid Iravani accused Washington of breaching the ceasefire through military operations near the Strait of Hormuz, including attacks on Iranian oil tankers near Jask Port and strikes on coastal areas. He said continued US military activity and the naval blockade imposed since 13 April risked "catastrophic consequences" extending beyond the region and threatening international peace and security.

Baghaei also attacked Trump's rhetoric after the US President described recent strikes as a "love tap". In a post on X, the Iranian spokesman said "disjointed, delusional tweets no longer hold any sway over reality", condemning what he called Washington's "whimsical adventurism and roguish behaviour".

Separately, the US State Department announced fresh Israel-Lebanon talks on 14-15 May aimed at advancing a broader peace and security agreement and addressing the Hezbollah issue. —*Agencies*



The US Navy struck two Iranian-flagged oil tankers on Friday accused of breaking the American blockade, after US and Iranian forces exchanged fire overnight on Thursday —*SCREENGRAB*

US blocks 2 more Iranian oil tankers

United States Central Command (CENTCOM) said on Friday that US naval forces disabled two more Iranian-flagged oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman as part of the ongoing US blockade against the Islamic Republic, while also redirecting 57 commercial vessels in the region. CENTCOM said US forces disabled the Iranian unladen tankers M/T Sea Star III and M/T Sevda before they could enter a port. A US Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet operating from USS George HW Bush (CVN 77) fired precision munitions, preventing them from reaching Iranian territory. This comes after US forces disabled another Iranian-flagged tanker, M/T Hasna, on Wednesday —*ANI*

US IMPOSES SANCTIONS ON IRAN'S ARMS

The US Treasury Department has announced new sanctions targeting 10 individuals and companies accused of helping Iran procure weapons, drone components and missile-related materials under President Donald Trump's "Economic Fury" campaign.

The measures target networks linked to Iran's Centre for Progress and Development of Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), including firms in China, Hong Kong and Belarus. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Washington would continue targeting entities supplying Iran's military.

The sanctions cover companies allegedly linked to Shahed drone and ballistic missile procurement operations.—PTII

US REMOVES URANIUM FROM VENEZUELA

US Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) on Friday announced the successful removal of all remaining highly enriched uranium from a research reactor in Venezuela, calling the operation a significant step in reducing nuclear security risks in South America and the US homeland. According to the NNSA, a semi-autonomous agency within the department, the mission was carried out in coordination with Venezuela's Ministry of Science and Technology, the International Atomic Energy Agency and UK experts. The RV-1 reactor supported nuclear research, but after research ended in 1991, uranium was enriched above a 20 per cent threshold. —ANI

RUBIO BACKS US SANCTIONS AGAINST CUBA

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio defended the Trump administration's decision to slap new sanctions on Cuba, the largest of which is against GAESA, a business conglomerate operated by the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces. The sanctions announced Thursday, besides GAESA and leader, included Moa Nickel, a Cuban joint venture with Canada's Sherritt International, which immediately announced it would withdraw from the business, ending a 32-year presence. In remarks to the press Friday, Rubio said the sanctions were not on the Cuban people and he referred to GAESA as a company that "is taking anything that makes money in Cuba and illegally putting it into the pockets of regimes." —*PTI*

Putin denounces NATO at Victory Day parade

MOSCOW, 9 MAY

Russian President Vladimir Putin used Russia's annual Victory Day in Moscow's Red Square to defend the war in Ukraine, denounce NATO and project confidence in eventual victory.

Addressing troops and foreign dignitaries during the parade marking the Soviet Union's defeat of Nazi Germany in World War Two, Putin described Ukraine as an "aggressive force" backed by "the entire bloc of NATO". He insisted Russia was fighting a "just" war and declared: "Victory has always been and will be ours."

The parade took place under heavy security as a fragile US-backed ceasefire temporarily reduced fears of Ukrainian attacks on the Russian capital. However, both Moscow and Kyiv accused each other of violating separate truce announcements made this week.

For the first time in nearly two decades, the Red Square parade was held without tanks, missiles or other heavy military hardware, apart from a flypast of combat aircraft. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov cited the "current operational situation" and additional security concerns.

US President Donald Trump said Russia and Ukraine had agreed to observe a ceasefire from Saturday to Monday alongside a prisoner exchange, calling it a possible "beginning of the end" of the war.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy mocked Russian security fears by jokingly "permitting" Moscow's celebrations to proceed without Ukrainian drone strikes.

Authorities in Moscow also imposed restrictions on mobile internet and messaging services during the event. Several foreign leaders attended, including Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico and Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko. —*Agencies*

Russian President Vladimir Putin used Russia's annual Victory Day celebration in Moscow's Red Square to denounce NATO —*ANI*

Hantavirus: Spain to evacuate 140 from cruise

MADRID, 9 MAY

Spanish authorities are preparing to receive over 140 passengers and crew on board a hantavirus-stricken cruise ship, where officials will perform careful evacuations.

The vessel is expected to arrive Sunday at the Spanish island of Tenerife, and passengers will be taken to a "isolated, cordoned-off area," said the head of Spain's emergency services, Virginia Barcones.

Both the US and the UK have agreed to send planes to evacuate citizens from the cruise.

While three people have died since the outbreak, and five passengers who left the ship are known to be infected with hantavirus, cruise operator Oceanwide Expeditions said Friday there were no people with symptoms of a possible infection on board the Dutch-flagged ship, the MV Hondius.

WHO considers the risk to the wider public.

On Friday, WHO said a plane flight attendant briefly boarded by an infected cruise passenger has tested negative for hantavirus. Raising concerns about the virus' potential transmissibility.

Spanish passengers reportedly said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of fears they'll be ostracised once on land, that despite the outbreak, their days aboard have passed with relative tranquillity.

The US agreed to send a plane to repatriate about 17 Americans who are still on the ship. —*PTI*

No, we seem to have things under very good control. They know that virus very well. It's been around a long time. Not easily transferable, unlike Covid. But we'll see, we're studying it very closely

-Donald Trump, US President

Hungary's Peter Magyar to be sworn in as PM

BUDAPEST, 9 MAY

Hungary's incoming prime minister, Peter Magyar, on Saturday at the Parliament to be sworn in, ending Viktor Orban's 16-year autocratic rule.

Magyar's center-right Tisza party defeated Orban's nationalist-populist Fidesz last month.

The win will allow Tisza to roll back policies that gave Orban a reputation among many of his critics as a far-right authoritarian and clamp down on alleged corruption within the European Union, where the former PM had upended the bloc by often vetoing key decisions.

Orban's Fidesz-KDNP coalition will control 52 seats, down from 135, while the far-right Mi Hazank (Our Homeland) party will hold six seats.

Magyar has promised to repair his country's ties with the EU, which Orban had pushed to the breaking point, and to restore Hungary's place among Western democracies, whose standing had been called into question as Orban drifted ever closer to Russia. —*PTI*

Exhibits at the 'Geographies of Distance: Remembering Home' at the 61st International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, in Venice, Italy—*PT*

WAR TENSIONS OVERSHADOW VENICE BIENNALE OPENING

VENICE, 9 MAY

Geopolitical tensions hit the Venice Biennale contemporary art exhibition, which opened its most chaotic and contested edition on Saturday with no Golden Lions after the jury quit in protest of Israel's and Russia's participation and loud protests.

The jury limited its action to countries probed by the International Criminal Court for human rights, some say the US should be included.

British artist Anish Kapoor cited "the politics of hate and war and all that that's been going on now for too long".

Rooted in New Orleans Black Masking culture born from practices brought by enslaved Africans, the costume-like sculpture signals the show's focus on minority perspectives. The first African woman chosen to curate the main Biennale exhibition, the late Koyo Kouoh assembled 110 artists under a title meant to spotlight the overlooked.

A naked woman hangs from a bell outside the Austrian Pavilion, a human clapper making the performance art by Florentina Holzinger one of the hottest appointments in the Giardini. —*PTI*

US CUSTOMS

Disney cruise staff visas revoked over child sexual abuse

SAN DIEGO, 9 MAY

US immigration authorities have cancelled the visas of over two dozen cruise ship workers, including Disney Cruise Line staff, over allegations involving child sexual abuse images.

According to a statement issued by US Customs and Border Protection on Friday, officers and identified 27 individuals allegedly involved in the "possession, transportation, distribution, or viewing" of child sexual abuse material.

Most of those affected were from the Philippines. Authorities said their visas were revoked and they were returned to their home countries. The agency did not specify which ships were searched, where the operations took place, or why the vessels had been targeted. It also said no further information was available and did not indicate whether any passengers were victims. Some of the ships had docked in San Diego.

Disney Cruise Line said it maintains a "zero-tolerance policy for this type of behaviour" and had fully cooperated with law enforcement. The company added that while most of the individuals were not employed by Disney, those who were "are no longer with the company".

Immigrant and workers' rights organisations criticised the lack of transparency surrounding the operation. Benjamin Prado, of advocacy group Unión del Barrio, said campaigners had struggled to obtain details about the workers' status or the basis for the enforcement action.

Prado also questioned whether due process had been followed and raised concerns about possible or surveillance before the detentions. Border Protection has said a criminal charge is not required for a visa to be revoked. —*PTI*

Officers identified 27 individuals on Friday allegedly in possession of child sexual abuse material —*SCREENGRAB*

Handwriting on new note matches Epstein death note

NEW YORK, 9 MAY

A note a cellmate said he discovered after experts have confirmed Jeffrey Epstein's first suspected jail suicide attempt to have been penned by the same person as a note that authorities found in the sex offender's cell after he killed himself. Three forensic examiners concluded the notes share authorship, citing spacing, letter shapes, capitalisation and punctuation.

In addition to the two jail notes, experts also reviewed writing samples from the former cellmate, Nicholas Tartaglione, including part of a note he sent to the New York Daily News in 2019 in which he denied involvement in Epstein's death.

Experts ruled out Tartaglione as the author, finding "dissimilarities between his handwriting and the handwriting in question".

Epstein and Tartaglione shared a cell for about two weeks, beginning soon after Epstein's July 2019 arrest on sex trafficking charges and ending with the suspected suicide attempt. —*PTI*

Mining could add 25M jobs by 2047 in India: Report

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

India's mining sector has the potential to contribute an additional USD 500 billion to the economy and create up to 25 million incremental jobs by 2047. However, this will require a major shift towards "Mining 5.0" driven by artificial intelligence, integrated digital systems and sustainable operations, according to a Deloitte-ICC report. India's aspiration of becoming a USD 30 trillion economy by 2047, mining can potentially play a disproportionately transformative role," the report said. It added that the sector "can generate up to 25 million incremental jobs, direct and indirect," while "contributing as much as USD 500 billion in additional GDP, the report states. The mining sector currently contributes around 2-3 per cent to India's GDP. —*ANI*

India, IOM discuss migration pathways

UNITED NATIONS, 9 MAY

India's Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh met with International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Director General Amy Pope on Friday at the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) for the Global Compact for Migration (GCM). "Discussions focused on expanding and diversifying regular migration pathways and on India's proactive approach to the implementation of GCM and IOM activities in India," Singh said in a social media post. IOM is the leading UN-related intergovernmental organisation in the field of migration. Singh also met with the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship of Canada, Lena Metlege Diab. "Discussions focused on the Canada-India Migration Initiative and areas of mutual interest in mobility of skilled workforce and students," he said. —*PTI*

Solrato, Solaire to tap $5B North India market

ALIGARH, 9 MAY

In a significant move for the renewable energy sector, Solrato Power has announced a strategic partnership with Solaire, a proud "Make in India" brand supported by the 30-year legacy of Kerala's renowned Lagnuvo Group. The collaboration aims to target and secure a substantial share of North India's burgeoning $5 billion green energy market. The alliance combines Solrato Power's strong regional presence and expertise in local deployment with Solaire's high-efficiency, advanced solar infrastructure solutions. Together, they plan to revolutionise energy supply for residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial consumers across Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi NCR, and surrounding regions. The North Indian solar market is poised for rapid expansion, driven by government initiatives such as the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana and the PM KUSUM Scheme. —*PTI*

New labour laws in force as govt publishes rules

New wage, social security and rules for gig workers kick in

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

The process of full implementation of the labour codes is completen an official confirmed—*AI*

After a long wait of over five years, the Central Government has fully operationalised the four labour codes by publishing rules, ensuring minimum wage and universal social security for all workers.

The four codes, namely the Code on Wages, 2019, the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the Code on Social Security, 2020, and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, came into effect from 21 November 2025. The four codes were introduced to modernise and consolidate 29 labour laws into a simplified and contemporary framework.

An official told PTI that the rules under the four codes are now notified in the official gazette of the government, and with this, the process of full implementation of the labour codes is complete. He explained that though the labour codes became law of the land on 21 November 2025, certain explanations were not provided due to the absence of rules. The draft rules were published on 30 December 2025, to seek feedback from stakeholders and were notified after legal vetting. The publishing of rules under the four codes was necessary to make the new laws fully operational.

The codification of 29 existing labour laws into the four labour codes was undertaken to address long-standing challenges and make the system more efficient and contemporary. The codification aims to enhance ease of doing business, promote employment generation, ensure safety, health, and social & wage security for every worker.

The provisions of the labour codes include a mandatory appointment letter, free health check-ups for workers aged 40 years and above, and equal work, pay and opportunity for women working in different shifts. The new legal framework also mandates the establishment of a National Reskilling Fund, which will be utilised for reskilling workers who lose their jobs.

The rules also capped the weekly working hours at 48 hours. "The number of hours of work which shall constitute a normal working day for an employee whose wage period is other than on a daily basis shall be so fixed that the total number of weekly working hours shall not exceed forty-eight hours," according to the rules.

The rules also provide for at least one weekend off or rest day to workers and payment of overtime for working beyond working hours —*PTI*

FRAUD ALLEGATIONS

Reliance Group cases: CBI searches 17 premises

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

The CBI on Saturday conducted searches at 17 premises in Mumbai in connection with three cases registered against Reliance ADA Group companies Reliance Telecom Limited, Reliance Commercial Finance Limited and Reliance Home Finance Limited and their directors, officials said.

"These searches are being conducted at the residential premises of directors of the above-mentioned companies as well as at the office premises of intermediary companies whose accounts were used for diversion of bank funds," a spokesperson for the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said in a statement.

No immediate reaction was available from the companies.

The CBI got a search warrant issued from a special court in Mumbai on Friday. The searches have led to the seizure of incriminating documents, the officials said.

The total quantum of the alleged loss suffered by banks and the Life Insurance Company (LIC) of India in these cases is Rs 27,337 crore, they added. "Searches have also revealed that multiple intermediary companies were operating from same address. The investigation is continuing," the statement said.

The federal agency has lodged seven cases against the Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group based on complaints from various public sector banks and the LIC in connection with alleged frauds involving thousands of crores of rupees.

The CBI had conducted searches at 14 locations in the last few months, immediately after the registration of these cases.

The agency has arrested two senior executives of Rcom, joint president D Vishwanath, who was the overall in-charge of the group's banking operations, and vice-president Anil Kalya, who had actively supported Vishwanath in managing the banking operations and payments and utilisation of funds on April 24.

"Both the accused persons are presently in judicial custody. The investigation into the cases relating to the Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group is being monitored by the Supreme Court," the statement said. —*PTI*

JAN SURAKSHA: ₹25,160 CR SETTLED

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Jan Suraksha schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana have settled claims worth Rs 25,160 crore since their launch in 2015, Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** said on Saturday.

Jan Suraksha schemes Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) envisions affordable financial protection to all, particularly the underserved, were launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 9 May, 2015.

These flagship schemes, which completed 11 years, aim to broaden the insurance and pension landscape by shielding citizens against life's uncertainties and fostering long-term financial resilience. Sitharaman said that over 27 crore, 58 crore and 9 crore enrolments have been done under PMJJBY, PMSBY and APY, respectively.

On PMJJBY, the scheme has settled claims worth more than Rs 21,500 crore for over 10.7 lakh families. Under the PMSBY scheme, she said claims worth nearly Rs 3,660 crore for over 1.84 lakh families were settled.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said digitisation and the online Jan Suraksha Portal have simplified enrolment and accelerated settlements for beneficiaries and families across the country efficiently. —*PTI*

EMERGING COLLABORATION

Quantum, nuke, AI frontiers of India-US ties

WASHINGTON, 9 MAY

Quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, and nuclear science are set to be the next key areas of cooperation between India and the United States, according to India's Ambassador to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra. Speaking at the US-India AI and Emerging Technology Forum, Kwatra highlighted nuclear fusion as an emerging area of collaboration, alongside established fission technologies used in civil nuclear power projects worldwide.

India and the US are part of the international nuclear fusion experiment, ITER, near Cadarache in France, which involves the European Union, US, Russia, India, and China. "I would even single out nuclear here because there are parts of nuclear which are of course old and established, but there are parts which are emerging, nuclear fusion in particular," Kwatra said at the forum organised by USISPF, ORF America, and the Motwani Jadeja Foundation.

He also listed small and modular reactors as a new technological frontier for cooperation. A delegation of American nuclear firms is scheduled to visit India later this month to explore opportunities, following India's opening of the civil nuclear sector to private participation last year. The country's recent enactment of the SHANTI Act aims to replace the Atomic Energy Act of 1964 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (CNLD) Act of 2010, which had posed barriers for global companies.

Kwatra emphasised that the SHANTI Act unlocks the private sector's potential in nuclear technology.

"Nuclear fusion is, again, one of those areas where if you combine it, for example, with the deployment of AI in optimising the progress of nuclear fusion technology, and later on, hopefully in a few years' time, if the quantum compute through quantum advancement leads us to that space where you bring in new capacities of compute into nuclear fusion, you may be looking at something really exciting," he said.

The Indian envoy also listed biopharmaceuticals as a very important priority area in the India-US partnership. —*PTI*

RBI officers seek intervention of promotion policy

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

RBI officers' union has written to RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra seeking intervention to correct the promotion policy and restore a time-bound system. RBI officers across in Mumbai staged protests on Friday against recent policy changes that link promotions to vacancy availability, replacing the earlier time-bound promotion system.

Reserve Bank of India Officers' Association, in a letter dated 8 May, expressed disappointment over the decision of the central bank to proceed with the promotion policy without adequately considering the concerns, objections, and constructive

suggestions repeatedly placed by the association on behalf of the officer community.

Citing past interactions with officers at various regional offices, it said that the Governor had indicated the possibility of a few time-bound promotions.

However, the final policy not only failed to address the structural stagnation prevailing across grades but has also disregarded the core concerns repeatedly highlighted by the association. According to estimates, about 8,000 officers working at the RBI are likely to be impacted by the change.

"We request the top management to reconsider the matter urgently and initiate a comprehensive review of the revised promotion policy in consultation with RBIOA for a fair and sustainable framework for career progression of officers," it noted.

The association also demanded time-bound promotions from Grade A to Grade E and sought removal of the condition requiring five years' service in a grade for eligibility to facilities, allowances and entitlements attached to that grade. —*PTI*

FII ownership drops to 14-year low

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

–REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

Foreign Institutional Investor ownership as a percentage of total Indian equities has fallen from 19.9 per cent in April 2016 to 14.7 per cent in April 2026, marking its lowest level since June 2012, according to JM Financial's Fundamental Research report. However, according to the report, Domestic Institutional Investor ownership has concurrently risen over the years, reaching 18.9 per cent.

This shift highlighted a significant transformation in the market's holding structure as domestic mutual funds reached a record-high share of domestic equity holdings, a fuelled by Systematic Investment Plan inflows. In what the report characterised as a near-perfect counter-absorption, DIIs increased their stake in 39 out of 41 Nifty stocks where FIIs sold.

This movement indicated that domestic institutions were acting as a systematic buyer of every FII exit. The breadth of this retreat is reflected in the fact that over the past three years, 41 out of 50 Nifty-50 stocks saw net FII selling, signalling a macro-level decision to reduce India allocation. "The 12-month FII flow data reveals a market where selling has been the dominant theme, with 10 out of 16 sectors recording net outflows over the period," the report said.

The report added that the heaviest outflows were witnessed in information technology, banking, financial services and insurance, and FMCG sectors. However, capital goods and telecom continued to attract positive inflows.

It also highlighted selective increases in FII stakes in companies such as 360 ONE, GE Vernova T&D and One 97 despite broader market selling trends during the period under review. —*ANI*

Dr Hemant Pande is CMD of Western Coalfields

NAGPUR, 9 MAY

Dr Hemant Sharad Pande has assumed charge as the Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD) of Western Coalfields Limited (WCL) in Nagpur on Friday. Dr Pande, who began his professional career in 1989 with Coal India Limited as a mining engineer, possesses 37 years of experience in WCL and South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL). Prior to assuming charge as the CMD, he was serving as Director (Human Resources) at WCL, a statement said. During his tenure, initiatives such as the 'SWASTH' portal for improved healthcare management, Dispensary Management System, and modernisation of various HR portals were implemented. In 2022, he was honoured with the 'Best General Manager Award' by Coal India Limited. T —*PTI*

WEF WARNS

Cybersecurity attackers & defenders use AI

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Cybersecurity is entering an "AI versus AI" era, with companies increasingly deploying autonomous artificial intelligence systems to investigate, detect and respond to cyberattackas hackers themselves rapidly adopt AI-driven attack methods, according to a new World Economic Forum (WEF) white paper released in collaboration with KPMG.

The report, titled "Empowering Defenders: AI for Cybersecurity", said attackers are increasingly using AI "to increase the speed, scale and sophistication of threats", forcing cybersecurity systems to evolve beyond traditional human-led defences.

"Adversaries are increasingly operating at machine speed, using AI to conduct reconnaissance of targets and vulnerabilities, generate malware, exploit code, evade detection and launch attacks at scale," the report said.

The WEF report noted that what earlier required "weeks of effort can now be executed in minutes", lowering technical barriers for cybercriminals and increasing the scale of attacks.

To counter this shift, organizations are increasingly deploying autonomous AI-driven systems to investigate suspicious activity and recommending response actions in real time.

Highlighting real-world deployments, the report cited IBM's "ATOM" system, which autonomously investigates, enriches and scores cybersecurity alerts using agentic AI. According to the report, the system now handles "about 95 per cent of daily investigations" while automating more than "850 analyst hours per month".

The report also pointed to Allianz's "hypothesis-based AI analysis system", which dynamically retrieves and analyses forensic data during investigations instead of collecting all endpoint data centrally. The system was developed to address the growing challenge of analysing massive volumes of cybersecurity data generated across enterprise systems.

Meanwhile, Google has deployed AI agents such as "Big Sleep" and "CodeMender" to identify software vulnerabilities and automatically generate security patches. The report said CodeMender has already patched "more than 100 critical security issues".

The report added that 77 per cent of organizations already using AI in cybersecurity functions. —*ANI*

Global gold ETF demand rebounds in April: WGC

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Global investors rotated back into gold exchange-traded funds (ETFs) in April, with India recording inflows of USD 297 million — its 11th consecutive month of positive flows, according to a World Gold Council (WGC) report. Following notable outflows in March, global physically backed gold ETFs recorded inflows of USD 6.6 billion.

The April expansion lifted ETFs' total assets to USD 615 billion. Collective holdings rose 1 per cent to 4,137 tonnes, making it the third highest and just shy of the all-time high of 4,176 tonnes.

While India recorded positive flows of USD 297mn in April, Japan attracted USD 246mn, the report highlighted. China dominated Asian inflows. Hong Kong funds added a record USD 732 million, boosted by new product listings. Notably, mainland China ETFs drew USD 498 million.

Similarly, European funds saw a large inflow of USD 3.7 billion in April, flipping their year-to-date total from negative to positive. The UK led this surge, while Switzerland and Germany also contributed meaningfully.

The report noted that "positive flows appeared linked to heightened geopolitical and geoeconomic risks, as investors assessed inflationary implications of a more protracted Iran conflict and energy prices." Lastly, North America reversed course in April by recording inflows of USD 1 billion. — *ANI*

-ITFW35

Vaidehee, Zeel ousted from ITF W35

TUMAKURU, 9 MAY

India's Vaidehee Chaudhari bowed out in the semifinals of the ITF W35 after going down fighting to top seed Justina Mikulskyte here on Saturday. In the second semifinal, India's Zeel Desai was forced to retire despite leading against Poland's Zuzanna Pawlikowska. Lithuania's Justina ended Vaidehee's impressive run with a hard-fought 6-3, 2-6, 6-2 victory to set up a summit clash with second seed Zuzanna, who also survived a dramatic semifinal encounter. Justina struck the decisive break in the sixth game of the opening set before Vaidehee roared back strongly in the second, breaking in the fourth, sixth, and eighth games to level the match convincingly.—*PTI*

Archery WC 2026, Stage 2: Sahil Jadhav wins bronze

COPENHAGEN, 9 MAY

India's Sahil Jadhav clinched a bronze medal at the Archery World Cup Stage 2 in Shanghai, China, on Saturday as he took down Denmark's Martin Damsbo in the third-place match.

World University Games gold medallist Jadhav defeated the 40-year-old Danish archer 147-144 in the bronze medal match to grab India's first medal in the competition.

The 25-year-old Indian trailed 29-30 after the first end. But Damsbo hit three 9s in the next round while Jadhav had a perfect score, giving him a two-point lead. Jadhav doubled his advantage before the end.—*PTI*

Tajinderpal Singh Toor wins shot put title

SANGRUR, 9 MAY

Punjab's Tajinderpal Singh Toor won the men's shot put title in the fifth leg of the Indian Athletics Series here on Saturday, as the reigning Asian Games champion continued his preparations for the major competitions later this season.

The 31-year-old Toor dominated the men's shot put event as he sent the iron ball to 19.97m to emerge on top.

"My main goal this season is to peak in major international meets," says the national record holder.

Toor's season best of 21.03m was recorded earlier in April at the Delhi leg of the Indian Athletics Series.—*PTI*

-PCB

Debutant Awais leads Pak against Bangladesh

MIRPUR, 9 MAY

Bangladesh commanded proceedings on the first day, but Pakistan changed that dramatically around on the second, led by the youngest member of the team. Azan Awais, making his debut, steered Pakistan into a position of relative comfort in a century partnership alongside Imam-ul-Haq, and then another solid stand with fellow debutant Abdullah Fazal. By the end of the day, Awais had taken his side to 179 for the loss of just Imam's wicket. Awais had contributed an unbeaten 85, nearing a debut hundred on the third morning. As a result, Pakistan were only another 234 runs behind with nine wickets standing after Bangladesh posted 413. Pakistan 179 for 1 (Awais 85*, Imam 45, Mehidy 1-37) trail Bangladesh 413 (Shanto 101, Mominul 91, Mushfiqur 71, Abbas 5-92) by 234 runs.—*PTI*

WFI issues a show-cause notice to Vinesh Phogat

Accusing her of indiscipline, flouting anti-doping rule

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

DECLARING HER INELIGIBLE UNTIL 26 JUNE

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) on Saturday issued a detailed show-cause notice to Vinesh Phogat, accusing her of indiscipline and anti-doping rule violations, and declared her ineligible to compete in domestic events till June 26, 2026, for failing to complete the mandatory six-month notice period required for athletes returning from retirement under UWW Anti-Doping Rules.

It means that the two-time World Championship medallist will have to wait for her comeback, as she is targeting the National Open Ranking event in Gonda, starting Sunday, for her return to competition after quitting the sport in 2024 following her disqualification from the Paris Olympic Games. In the 15-page notice, the WFI alleged that Vinesh's conduct had caused "lasting damage to the reputation of Indian wrestling" in Paris and violated the provisions of the WFI Constitution, the UWW International Wrestling Rules, and anti-doping regulations. Vinesh has 14 days to respond to the notice.

The federation has sought her explanation on several charges, including her disqualification from the 2024 Paris Games after failing to make weight, alleged whereabouts failures under anti-doping rules, and competing in two weight categories during the March 2024 selection trials conducted by the then IOA-appointed ad-hoc panel.

The federation specifically mentioned that she is not eligible to compete in any domestic event till 26 June this year, including the National Open Ranking Tournament in Gonda. "The Federation must satisfy itself that you have not committed an Anti-Doping Rule Violation that would render you ineligible to represent the Federation in any forthcoming competition," the notice stated.

The notice also referred to a 4 May 2026 communication from the International Testing Agency (ITA), acting on behalf of UWW, recording a "missed Test" against Vinesh in relation to an unsuccessful doping control attempt on December 18, 2025. Referring to Article 5.7 of the UWW Anti-Doping Rules dealing with return from retirement, the WFI stated that Vinesh remains ineligible to compete till June 26, 2026 and therefore cannot participate in any domestic event before that date. —*PTI*

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) issues a show-cause notice to wrestler Vinesh Phogat for alleged indiscipline and anti-doping rule violations, and barred her from domestic events till June 26th over non-compliance with UWW Anti-Doping Rules, in New Delhi, on Saturday. Vinesh Phogat gets emotional as she arrives after Paris Olympics heartbreak, at IGI airport -*PTI*

Chennai Super Kings face LSG with aim to keep playoff hopes alive

CHENNAI, 9 MAY

The sixth-placed Chennai Super Kings will look to keep their playoff hopes alive when they face a beleaguered Lucknow Super Giants, currently languishing at the bottom of the points table, in an Indian Premier League match here on Sunday.

With the league stage entering a decisive phase, CSK remain in contention for a top-four finish despite an inconsistent campaign marked by batting collapses and patchy performances both at home and away.

Returning to Chepauk could offer the five-time champions an opportunity to regain momentum against LSG, who have endured a forgettable season and are already staring at an exit.

CSK's campaign has largely revolved around Sanju Samson, whose starts at the top have often dictated the team's fortunes.

While recruit Samson has emerged as the team's batting anchor and "backbone", skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad has struggled for consistency with the bat this season.

After a poor start, Ruturaj has regained form at the beginning of this month with crucial unbeaten knocks of 74 and 67, his resurgence helping steer CSK towards the top five, even though he failed in their last outing against Delhi Capitals, with Samson remaining unbeaten on a match-winning 52-ball 87. —*PTI*

CSK VS LSG @ M.A. Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai

3.30 pm IST

RCB look to regain batting firepower against MI

RAIPUR, 9 MAY

Royal Challengers Bengaluru will want their batting group to rebuild its muscle to snap a two-match losing streak, and put their IPL campaign back on track when they face Mumbai Indians here on Sunday.

The Royal Challengers were off to an early season flier, winning four out of their first matches, and the playoffs entry appeared a mere formality.

But now the situation has changed. The title holders have lost three of their last five matches to slip into a little mid-tournament crisis.

RCB, who are currently third on the table with 12 points from 10 matches, are still in a prime position to enter the knockout stage.

But the Bengaluru outfit will certainly be aware that they have lost a bit of the steam towards the business end of the tournament.

The RCB are tied with Rajasthan Royals and Gujarat Titans on 12 points, and either RR or GT will go ahead of them after their Saturday's match at Jaipur, pushing the Bengalurians down to fourth. That points table scenario in itself is slightly worrying, but apart from that external factor, the RCB will need the batting group to regain its range.

RCB VS MI @ Shaheed Veer Narayan Stadium Raipur

7.30 pm IST

On a tad tacky Ahmedabad pitch against the Titans, the RCB batters failed to go beyond 155, and even the 9-run DLS margin defeat against Lucknow Super Giants was not as close as the margin suggests.

The RCB required 19 runs in the final over to cross the line, but could not come close to that. Now, RCB batters are up against an even more potent, at least on paper, Mumbai attack that consists of Jasprit Bumrah, Corbin Bosch, AM Ghazanfar and Will Jacks.

The Raipur, the designated home venue of RCB, pitch is a bit of an unknown commodity, and the champions will need their batters at their very best on the weekend. —*PTI*

What led to BCCI's IPL crackdown? Reels, late-night outings

Reels made in restricted areas, outings that did not have security approvals, and players' proximity to social media influencers were some of the concerns that prompted the stern advisory from BCCI, and IPL franchises are now scrambling to ensure compliance without compromising on individual privacy. Late-night outings are among reasons. The Board's Anti-Corruption Unit flagged unauthorised guests in the hotel rooms of players, support staff, and team officials, and also warned of potential honey traps. As a result, the BCCI came up with an advisory that placed restrictions on the guests and made it mandatory for the players to keep security informed about their movements. One of the major violations pointed out was the players' "excessive proximity" to influencers, who get hired for short durations to create social media content for the participating teams.

Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shafali get NADA notices

Indian cricketers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shafali Verma have been issued notices by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for not being available for scheduled dope tests last year, leading to their first whereabouts failure. It is reliably learnt that the two players, who are a part of NADA's Registered Testing Pool (RTP), did not explain the reasons for the missed tests, leading to the notices. "Notices have been issued to the concerned athletes, and the same has been intimated to the national federation (the BCCI) and the ICC," a well-placed source told PTI, even though NADA declined comment,

FIFA WORLD CUP 2026

Iranian federation confirms participation

TEHRAN, 9 MAY

Iran's football federation said on Saturday that the men's national team will take part in the 2026 World Cup this summer, but demanded that joint hosts, the United States, Mexico, and Canada, agree to its conditions amid the war in Western Asia.

The call comes after Canada refused entry to the federation's chief last month before the FIFA Congress because of his links to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the ideological arm of Iran's military, which it designated as a terror group in 2024.

Iran's presence at the tournament, which will take place between June 11 and July 19, has been shrouded in uncertainty since the eruption of war in Western Asia in February following strikes by the United States and Israel.

"We will definitely participate in the 2026 World Cup, but the hosts must take our concerns into account," the Iranian federation said on its official website. —*PTI*

DJOKOVIC FALLS EARLY AT ITALIAN OPEN

PARIS, 9 MAY

Novak Djokovic slumped to an early elimination from the Italian Open on Friday, crumbling to a second-round defeat at the hands of qualifier Dino Prizmic, which leaves question marks about his physical condition ahead of Roland Garros.

Tennis icon Djokovic was sent packing by big-hitting Croatian Prizmic, who claimed the biggest scalp of his young career with a stunning 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 win on centre court in Rome. Djokovic, a 24-time Grand Slam winner, was making his comeback from a shoulder injury in the last big tournament before the French Open, which starts later this month. —*Agencies*

Chelsea end six-game losing run with 1-1 draw at Liverpool

LIVERPOOL, 9 MAY

Enzo Fernandez's free kick secured Chelsea a 1-1 draw against Liverpool at Anfield on Saturday, ending the visitors' six-game losing run in the Premier League and earning caretaker manager Calum MacFarlane a first charge point.

Liverpool remained fourth in the table with 59 points from 36 games, a step closer to Champions League qualification, while Chelsea is in ninth with 49 points from the same number of matches.

Liverpool took the lead with a wonderful strike from the edge of the box by Ryan Gravenberch, but Chelsea improved on their recent limp performances and equalised when Fernandez's set-piece eluded everyone and nestled in the bottom corner.

Both sides had efforts correctly ruled out for offside, while Dominik Szoboszlai and Virgil van Dijk struck the woodwork for Liverpool as they pressed for a late winner.

"I think the effort today was really good," Chelsea defender Marc Cucurella told TNT Sports. "I don't think it was probably our best moments, but we showed if we play together and if we play together then we have a good level. —*PTI*

Enzo Fernandez has enjoyed a productive campaign for Chelsea-*X/@ CHELSEA*

GM APPROACHES SPORTS MINISTRY

AICF assures prize money for Abhijeet

NEW DELHI, 9 MAY

Renowned Indian Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta, left frustrated by the delay in receiving prize money for his Odisha Open title earlier this year, has now received assurances from the All India Chess Federation that the issue will be resolved and "necessary action" will be initiated to clear his dues.

Gupta, a Chess Olympiad medallist and five-time Commonwealth champion, had been left exasperated as repeated letters to the AICF failed to secure his payment even four months after winning the title, forcing him to seek intervention from the Sports Ministry.

Sources said the Odisha association, which organised the tournament, is embroiled in infighting, with its bank account frozen and the organisers unable to clear the dues.

"I kindly request the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to look into this matter and help ensure that players receive their rightful prize money with transparency and accountability," wrote the 36-year-old Gupta on 'X'.

"This is not just about one unpaid prize. It is about protecting the dignity and trust of every chess player in India." Gupta also told PTI that the organisers owe him Rs 5.5 lakh in prize money for the tournament, which he won in January.

However, he later posted on social media that AICF president Nitin Narang had assured him that the issue would be resolved.

"The President of All India Chess Federation @narangnitin ji called me and assured me that the necessary action has been initiated!" wrote Gupta. The Grandmaster had earlier said in his post that he was assured the prize money would be paid within a month, but the payment never materialised.

"However, when I followed up later, they (organisers) stopped responding," he said. "As a sportsperson, you learn to accept losses more often than victories that is part of the journey. But what hurts even more is winning and still not receiving what you rightfully earned."—*PTI*

Super Rapid and Blitz: D Gukesh on fifth spot

WARSAW, 9 MAY

World Champion D Gukesh endured a shaky start to the blitz section but recovered ground with a commanding victory over Poland's Jan-Krzysztof Duda in the ninth round of the Super Rapid and Blitz in Warsaw. After finishing the rapid section with nine points out of a possible 18, Gukesh collected four more points from the opening nine blitz rounds to take his tally to 13 out of 27 at the halfway stage of the blitz competition. Hans Moke Niemann of the United States continued to lead the tables despite a very mediocre show on the first day of blitz.

The American moved to 16.5 points after scoring 3.5/9 and is now a half point ahead of compatriot Wesley So.

The third American Fabiano Caruana shares the third spot with Slovenian Vladimir Fedoseev on 15 points apiece, while Gukesh comes in next two points behind. French duo of Firouzja Alireza and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave share the sixth spot on 12.5 points alongside Duda.

—*Agencies*